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Iran: Reportage on Pre-Majles Election Activities

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Near East & South Asia

SUPPLEMENT

Iran: Reportage on Pre-Majles Election Activities

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Alviri on Upcoming Elections, Effect on Economy

96LA0100A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 18 Nov 95 pp 1, 3, 4

[Interview with Engineer Morteza Alviri, secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Commercial Industrial Zones, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] **In an interview with AKHBAR NEWS NETWORK, Engineer Morteza Alviri, the secretary of the Supreme Council of Free Commercial Industrial Zones, responded to our questions regarding the Fifth Majles elections; the procedures for holding these elections; the characteristics required of the Majles; the characteristics of the deputies; parties, their creation, and their activities in the country; and the press and the role that it should play in various areas, including the political and economic development of the country.**

He was born in 1327 [21 March 1948-20 March 1949], is married and has three children. He graduated in electrical energy from Sharif Industrial University in 1351 [21 March 1972-20 March 1973], and has an MA in management.

Alviri was arrested and jailed five times, in 1350 [21 March 1971-20 March 1972], 1351 [21 March 1972-20 March 1973], 1356 [21 March 1977-20 March 1978], and 1357 [21 March 1978-20 March 1979], for political activities against the Pahlavi regime. After the victory of the Islamic revolution in Iran, in 1357, he became a member of the Central Council of the Islamic Revolution Committee and in 1358 [21 March 1979-20 March 1980] a member of the Command Council of the Guard Corps.

During 1359-1362 [21 March 1980-20 March 1984], he was the head of the Industries and Mines Committee in the First Majles.

In the 1363-1367 [21 March 1984-20 March 1989] period, he was the parliamentary deputy of the Plan and Budget Organization. In 1364 [21 March 1985-20 March 1986], he became a member of the seven-member council of the "Headquarters for the Preparation of the Plan for Crisis Conditions," which was created by the prime minister following the drop in the price of oil in the international markets.

During 1365-1366 [21 March 1987-20 March 1988], he participated as a defender of Iranian rights in the two bills against the United States discussed in the International Court at the Hague.

During 1367-1371 [21 March 1988-20 March 1993], in the Third Majles, he was the head of the Planning and Budget Committee of the Majles and was in charge of the final writing of the First Five-Year Plan and the annual budgets of the country.

During 1364-1366 [21 March 1985-20 March 1988], he taught at the College of Economics of 'Allameh Tabataba'i University.

In 1370-1371 [21 March 1991-20 March 1993], he was the Majles representative in the meetings of the Economic Council.

In 1371-1372 [21 March 1992-20 March 1994], he was the secretary of the Economic Committee of the National Security Council and the deputy for plans and programs of the Ministry of Mines and Metals.

Articles and books published by Engineer Morteza Alviri include: "Human Ties With Work," "Change and Development," "The Reconstruction of Japan After the War," "The Role of Iran's Free Zones in the Development of Non-Oil Exports," "A Critique of the System of Budget Planning in Iran," "The System of Labor Relations," "The Control of the Budget Mechanism in Iran," and "The Single Foreign Currency Rate System, Requirements, and Consequences."

AKHBAR NEWS NETWORK

[AKHBAR] We are on the threshold of the elections for the Fifth Majles. What are the most important issues that exist at this juncture, and what should be done to hold the elections in the best possible way?

[Alviri] Usually, everyone, depending on his field and how he spends his time, regards that field and area to be the most important issue in the society and the country. Since the victory of the Islamic revolution, I have spent most of my time and energy on economic issues and areas, but I believe that the most important and the most difficult problems of the country are political problems and not economic problems, in the sense that if the political climate and political attitude of the society is not sound and favorable for the exchange of ideas and opinions, economic analyses and perspectives will also not be used on the course of the construction of the country, and economic decisions instead of being the result of the opinion of experts will be merely based on political pressures and the creation of a climate by one group or another. This issue naturally can eliminate the golden opportunity for a society that has come out of 2,500 years of dictatorship and has then faced an eight-year war and at this juncture needs very calculated and precise economic planning and can change the situation

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in such a way that the long-term interests of the country are not noted.

In other words, we are much more in need of the political reconstruction of the country than economic reconstruction. Regarding a country that for many years has tasted the bitter taste of dictatorship and despotism, a country that immediately after the victory of the revolution has faced violence by terrorist minigroups and because of the war conditions and the mobilization of forces to participate in the war, could not provide a sound climate for the activities of various political parties, groups, and organizations. Naturally, at such a juncture, the political climate of the country needs basic reconstruction. It is on the course of political reconstruction that we can expect the economic reconstruction to also be on its proper course and direction and move forward. From this perspective, the Majles and the Majles elections can be noted as a vast and deep political movement in the society.

The elections of various terms of the Majles, except for the First Majles elections, were affected by unsound factors that disturbed the political climate of the country. When there is a lack of sound and proper conditions for the exchange of ideas and opinions and individuals are not able to present themselves to the society as they should—in other words, if, God forbid, the conditions are such that certain people are able to drive their rivals out of the field through public deception or labeling and slandering others—some may come to the Majles who would not have been elected if the people had known their views very well.

The fact that at a particular juncture, through raising certain slogans, a large number of people are driven out or individuals who are not expected to be elected come to the Majles can precisely demonstrate this issue.

I specifically refer to the Third and Fourth Majles elections. In the Third Majles elections, a large number of candidates, through the use of the label "American-style Islam," and in the Fourth Majles elections, a large number through the accusation and label of "anti-religious guardianship," were driven out of the field. The possibility also exists that in the Fifth Majles elections, labels such as "technocrat" or "anti-clerical" will be a tool for eliminating candidates.

All of these issues are considered proof and signs of the climate not being sound and the lack of the existence of a desirable climate for the exchange of ideas and recognition and presentation of candidates for the people.

[AKHBAR] What do you think should be done to counter such a situation?

[Alviri] To counter such a situation, both the press and the clerics, both the Friday and congregational imams, and also the officials of the country can and must play a determining role in the sense that, firstly, they must tell the people about the duty and the role of the Majles. The great problem our society is facing is that many people have inappropriate expectations of the deputies, expectations that are by no means among the duties of the deputies. For example, some people merely vote for a candidate so that he can carry out a very small and limited project, such as building a bridge, or establishing a health service in a village, or in order to create a job for a child in a family, or in a region where there is a dispute, so he could support one group against another. We see that to play such a role in the Majles, a middleman who may be merely literate is more suitable than a legal expert or sociologist.

If you ask the opinion of these individuals and ask them why they are electing a certain deputy, rarely will you hear a response that states the main duty of a Majles deputy. This is a great mission and responsibility that the press, the clerics, and the officials of the country can and must perform, and familiarize the people with the main role of the Majles and the deputies. Automatically, when the people become familiar with the role of the Majles, the issue of the competence of the candidates is raised. If we consider the Majles as the highest legal organization of the country, after the leader, and if we regard it as an authority for decision making, legislation, supervision, inquiry and investigation, and a place where the large programs of the country must be ratified, we shall see that many of those who came to the Majles in the past four terms, in fact, occupied seats that they were not qualified to hold.

In my opinion, contrary to the opinion that at the present is publicized and propagated in some media regarding commitment and being a Hezbollahi, that being a Hezbollahi in the sense of belief in the principles of the revolution and Islam is the necessary condition for being a Majles deputy, I believe that by no means is it a sufficient one. It is true that a Majles deputy must be sufficiently committed, but if you gather a number of individuals who are faithful to the revolution and Islam, who perform nightly prayers in the Majles but who are uninformed about the political and economic issues and what occurs in the world, undoubtedly, you will drag the country toward complete bankruptcy. Hence, in my opinion, while being a Hezbollahi in the sense of theoretical and practical belief in the principles (not in the sense of disorderliness, breaking the law, and imposing opinion by force and violence) is a necessary condition, this condition is sufficient when it is accompanied by specialization, competence,

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and a broad outlook. Hence, in the election of Majles deputies, the people must seek out those who, in addition to being committed, which is the necessary condition, necessarily have expertise in one field which is needed by the Majles and at the same time have a broad view and perspective. I emphasize the broad and comprehensive perspective, because if an expert with his particular expertise, even if he has a doctorate or post-doctorate degree, if he sees the whole world merely in terms of his specialty, certainly he cannot solve any of the country's problems, but he himself will become a problem in the Majles. Hence, having a broad perspective and understanding world issues, or in other words, the inclusiveness of an individual, is another dimension to which attention must be paid in the Majles and the election of Majles deputies. The activities of political parties can play a sensitive role in achieving this goal, because the society must receive its information about the individuals from certain centers, since not all the people are able to acquire the detailed information needed on their own. The best means for the people to be able to know the candidates well is the existence and active presence of political parties in the society. Of course, due to shortcomings and problems after the revolution, especially the eight-year pause because of the war, the activities of parties and the implementation of Article 26 of the Constitution were not possible. The press can also play a very effective role in introducing the individuals. A sound political climate can prepare the grounds for the formation of a strong Majles. A strong Majles can in turn pave the road toward democracy and the political development of a society. In other words, these two can be complements of and escalate each other, and we cannot regard one as having priority over the other. Because of the lack of such suitable conditions, we have suffered greatly, but, no matter where you cut your losses, you make a profit. Hence, now that we are at the threshold of the elections, we must use all our capabilities and resources to ensure a more active presence of the people in the elections. We must provide conditions for groups and parties so that they participate in the elections enthusiastically.

[AKHBAR] What is your opinion about political parties, their establishment and activities?

[Alviri] Our people do not have pleasant memories of political parties, and the reason dates back to the tyrannical regime of the shah. At that time, a number of mandated political parties were created, which acted as the tools for the implementation of the goals of the dependent regime. After the revolution, too, the unsound and undesirable activities of political groups in the early revolution, some of which ended in armed activities and violence, resulted in political parties appearing to be a negative factor in the minds of the people.

Another factor that prevented political parties from taking shape was the imposed war and the necessity of the active presence of the people on the front. For this reason, there was less of an opportunity to engage in political issues, but the passage of time has at the present created conditions which, I feel, make the formation of political institutions impossible without political parties.

The most important problem that we previously had with regard to creating parties was that, prior to the revolution, we had not practiced and experienced democracy. For this reason, many groups and factions that came to power felt that they were the only just and correct movement and, hence, tried to drive any other movement out of the arena. Hence, they would not allow another group to be active and grow. We have witnessed this situation at various junctures, that one group that had power tried to drive off its rival through various labels and accusations. Hence, the motivation for the creation of political parties and organizations was automatically removed from individuals. I know very good and sincere forces that say, "We prefer to serve the society individually because as soon as we assemble and want to start a group movement, we will immediately face various accusations and labels that will prevent us from rendering the limited service we are now offering."

We see that the unsound political atmosphere that remains from prior to the revolution has caused stagnation and prevents the formation of political parties.

[AKHBAR] What do you think can be done to eliminate this atmosphere and correct the situation?

[Alviri] Correcting this situation requires the flexibility of the officials. They must approach the issues with a more open view and perspective. The Committee for Examination of the Competence of Political Parties must also look at the issues with a much more open perspective and merely allow individuals to engage in political activity on the basis of their commitment within the framework of the Constitution.

In the Friday prayer podiums and other assemblies, too, individuals who intend to engage in political activities within the framework of Islamic standards and the Constitution must have the opportunity to express their opinions.

We must provide conditions in which various individuals with various inclinations and opinions have the possibility of being active and expressing opinions. In this manner, we shall see that many of the parties which have despaired and felt hopeless concerning political activities and active participation in the political climate of the

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country will enter the arena, but if the conditions are not provided, many will sink into their shells and become indifferent and alienated from the political issues and the fate and future of the country. This is a danger that can threaten the future of the country, in other words, removing from politics those who created the revolution by becoming political. The concern is that people will only try to save themselves and have an ordinary life.

[AKHBAR] What role do you consider for political and guild parties and organizations in the Fifth Majles elections?

[Alviri] For the Fifth Majles elections, I do not have much hope for the activities of the parties, but I think that at this juncture, at least temporary organizations for the elections can be formed, in the sense that the guild circles and assemblies may have a great role in these elections and make up for the lack of political parties to some extent. For example, in many cities, especially in Tehran as a large city, there are societies, such as these of physicians, teachers, trades, etc., that can be formed in various assemblies. Their formation can be only for participation in the elections, and they can make the necessary studies about the candidates and introduce their candidates to the people. Even these guild organizations that introduce their candidates can form coalitions with each other, in which case, they may present, alongside the past recognized organizations, very credible and strong lists of candidates to the society and, in this way, play a determining role in the elections. These guild organizations that are formed at the juncture of the elections may in the future become parties that are legally registered and continue their activities. Hence, at the present momentary juncture, while I do not have hope for the formation of parties, I have hopes for establishing the foundations of parties.

[AKHBAR] How do you evaluate the four terms of the Majles and the activity of the Majles in these terms?

[Alviri] I believe that the Majles in Iran has so far been on the decline. I consider the most powerful Majles to be the First Majles because many of the candidates in that Majles were, firstly, elected in a very free and open election, without any restrictions, by the people.

Second, many of the faces that came to the Majles were those who had tasted hardship, prison, and torture prior to the revolution. For this reason, they were determined and experienced; in other words, they had gone through the burning kiln of the revolution.

Third, many of those candidates and deputies in the First Majles had a very broad vision, because, having been involved with issues of the revolution, they were familiar with both world issues and the issues of the entire country.

Since the First Majles, the Majles has declined. The reason is the quality of the elections and the expectations of the people regarding the deputies.

Another issue is lack of clarification of the duties of Majles deputies. This causes the Majles deputies who want to come to the next Majles as well to spend their time and energy on unjust and improper wishes. Hence, they neglect the broader, general work of the country and become busy with transitory affairs and those merely involving their constituencies.

Hence, the passage of time has moved us toward the elimination of those deputies with a broad, comprehensive vision.

[AKHBAR] In your opinion, what role must the press play in this area and also in the development of the country?

[Alviri] I consider the press the shock absorber of the political development of the country. The press can play an essential and key role in our being able to achieve desirable political conditions in the country, ensuring that the viewpoints are well transmitted and the exchange of opinions and ideas takes place, but there is a basic problem in our country, which I do not know how to solve. The problem is that the people have not yet become accustomed to reading. In many countries in the world, we see that people take advantage of every opportunity to read, but in our country, the number of individuals who read is small. Perhaps one of the factors in this problem goes back to before the revolution, when the government was indifferent to people reading and opening their horizons. Automatically, the existence of such a climate reduces the customers and demand for the press. For this reason, the circulation of the press in our country is far below that of other countries.

A two-way action can improve this situation. In various ways, the people must be encouraged to read. On the other hand, the press, too, by offering various issues that conform to the interests and wishes of the people should increase the inclination of the people to read. In order to make the political climate of the country sound and play a key role in the development of the country, and in order to have a free hand in the sense of being able to report various issues and not be under the pressure of various factors, the press can attract a larger number of people to reading, as is also true of radio and television.

[AKHBAR] In your opinion, to what extent has the press been able to play its role in the society? How should it act from now on?

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[Alviri] If what the people expect and pursue is not found in the press and the radio and television of the country, they will lose their trust in them and will go after foreign sources.

Having an open vision in overseeing the press and not imposing uncalled-for and unnecessary controls can help the expansion of the press atmosphere in the country and the development of publications.

There is a sort of self-censorship in our press. In other words, the pressures that are imposed on the press by some of the controllers drag many in the press into a stage of self-censorship, which results in the press not publishing what the people want and need. As a result, when what the people want is not in the press, they are inclined toward relying less on the press. The people are interested in knowing about the issues and developments and seeing the other side of the coin and knowing the depth and hidden aspects of issues. The press can, with the necessary artistry, fulfill this thirst of the people for knowledge and meet their expectations. If a newspaper or a journal is able to respond to what people want, it will grow and find its place because it will gain the people's trust, but if the newspapers merely repeat the news and issues of radio and television and the official and government sources, they will become a standard government and official newspaper and naturally will not be attractive to the people.

[AKHBAR] As an official, please explain: What is the government view regarding the press?

[Alviri] In the government of the country, there are two different and contradictory views. One is, because the country is going through its construction phases and there are many enemies waiting in ambush for us, we must limit freedoms, increase controls, and not allow the press to publish much concerning the issues, that we should try to have the press move on a specific line. Another viewpoint is that the requirement for the growth and development of a society is an open political atmosphere, and to make use of various ideas, these ideas must grow by facing and confronting each other. An open atmosphere must necessarily be created, the press must enjoy more freedom, and many of the controls and much of the supervision over them must be removed.

I myself regard the first viewpoint as detrimental to the revolution and the Islamic Republic of Iran and believe that a restricted and closed atmosphere and more controls will not only not protect the revolution and not cause the movement of the Islamic Republic and the revolution toward growth and perfection, but many of the forces, because they cannot be placed in these tight and restrictive frameworks, will leave the scene and give their place to yes-men who are ready to deviate from their expert viewpoints merely to protect their desks and positions. On the other hand, the thinking and solid forces who are not prepared to give tribute to anyone and hide their opinions will leave the scene, because you cannot find two people who think alike.

In the elimination events, first one larger and stronger movement eliminates the smaller and weaker one. As soon as it achieves power, immediately a new rift appears in it from within, which results in a new elimination, This continues, while the congenial movements, instead of focusing on differences, focus on what they have in common and accept the fact that opinions and views are different. The society and the country must be made up of the sum of all these views and opinions. They think that everyone who has the right to live must also have the right to express his opinions and views. It is in this area that everyone lives side by side peacefully and does not approach opposing views and opinions with the idea of eliminating them.

The basis of the growth and development of the society, in my opinion, is the freedom and the rights of human beings, and no restrictions must be imposed on expressing opinions and beliefs of others.

In any case, the combination of these two ways of thinking is what we are witnessing in the country today, and neither of these viewpoints since the beginning of the revolution has been able to fully govern the country.

Interview With Hojjati-Kermani on Upcoming Elections

96IA0101A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 22 Nov 95 pp 1, 4, 12

[Interview with Mohammad Javad Hojjati-Kermani, member of the Board of Trustees of the Islamic Polytechnic Institute and member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office of Research, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] When we sat face to face with him, I was reminded of the expression "just like seminary days."

He received us in something resembling that same cell for the student of the religious sciences that I used to see and know. Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammad Javad Hojjati-Kermani took the cups, washed them in a plain garden hose spigot, put them on a simple tray, and brought it. Then he went to work, poured boiling water from a flask into the cups and put tea bags one by one into the cups. All turned the same color.

"Please, help yourself."

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It is a room off the courtyard of the Polytechnic Institute. Around the edges of the host's unadorned seating area, he kept about 100 or 120 books on two metal shelves, and there were heaps of paper everywhere.

They say he lives the same way today that he lived when he was a seminary student in Qom, or when he was in exile in Yasuj in the time of the shah and before the triumph of the Islamic revolution, when he lived in Kerman or any other place he was and is. He has always maintained the life of the seminary student. As we left the courtyard, we called to him by name from outside the door.

"Yes?"

Before the revolution he knew both the plush red of the palace and exile. He was a deputy in the First Majles and in the Second Assembly of Experts. He was also cultural consultant to the president of the republic during the time of His Holiness Hojjatollah Khamene'i, may God prolong his life. He is now a writer, a historian, a researcher, and a member of the Board of Trustees of the great Islamic Polytechnic Institute. He is also a member of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs Office of Research. He is also a newspaper writer and is sometimes subjected to verbal and written abuse. He has also written a book entitled *The Lives of the Clergy of Kerman* and is a prominent clergyman. He is known for speaking plainly and standing by what he says.

We turned on the tape recorder and asked him to give his views on the day's current issues.

[Hojjati-Kermani] Please go ahead.

[AKHBAR] Thank you for receiving us. Permit me to begin with this question: In your view, what are the issues the press and the officials should be most sensitive about at this time?

[Hojjati-Kermani] Some of the topics I read about in your newspaper are new ones. I do not know the extent to which they have attracted readers. If topics like this are being seriously presented, if they are making a place for themselves, you must maintain your courage and say what you think is true.

Speaking the truth always solves problems, although there may be problems for the person presenting it. Sooner or later, more or less, this will have its effect, provided it is realistic and sincere, that there is sincerity between self and God, God and self, and the people.

However one must see what things are more important for presenting an issue.

Priorities must be kept in mind. One must see which issues are more important. The discrimination that exists? Or inflation? The malfunctions that are prevalent in society? Or is it the widespread perplexity and indifference, especially among youth? One must consider which of these is more important. In my view, the subject of the youth who we have not been able to nurture is an important topic. I saw a report that 45 percent of the population is under age 15. This is a huge figure. This age group (15 - 20 years old) was either not yet born or only two or three years old at the time of the revolution. What thought have we given to youth? This group has been nurtured in the lap of the revolution. They have many problems that we must answer.

In the depths of society and among the people, we see problems for which we must find solutions. Of course the officials are worried about these very public problems, but the important duty of the media is to study, analyze, and present ways to deal with these acute problems.

[AKHBAR] Because of the importance of the Majles, a discussion concerning the elections might be relevant in some way to these problems...

[Hojjati-Kermani] That is correct, but not for someone like me, who is not involved in the elections!

However, now that you have brought it up, I must say that the people have been given the opportunity to discuss and take part in these affairs. When the people talk about their daily problems, ways will be found to cure these problems. Moreover, when the people see their concerns expressed in the media, they will have more confidence in newspapers, radio, and television.

At the same time, the press has also acted upon its duty and its duties and responsibilities under religious law. Of course it must be noted that one cultural problem is intolerance. More than a political or an intellectual problem, this intolerance is considered to be a social failure. For example, you see that a minor automobile accident in the streets sometimes leads to a huge and spreading conflict.

If we understand this failure as a social phenomenon, we must not consider it to be limited to a part of society or some officials.

[AKHBAR] Therefore, must we consider this quality of intolerance to be a social phenomenon?

[Hojjati-Kermani] Intolerance is not specific to the officials or some of them. As I said, it is a social failure. This intolerance was evident beginning with the very first Majles. I think that the revolutionary fervor and the days of revolution in our society have remained in place. Since there has been no opportunity to correct and redirect this condition, it has gone in differing and contradictory directions. As a result the original state

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of excitement still exists, while the audiences and the subjects of discussions have come to differ. On the eve of the revolution, all of the people stood behind Imam Khomeyni (peace be upon him), rightfully, and became inflamed and excited. The imam's historic sermons that defined that era mobilized all of the people against the shah and the United States.

The public outcry in those days was constructive; it destroyed the foundation of the shah's dictatorship and threw the United States out in disgrace.

In those days, this condition was constructive.

It is no exaggeration if we say that those very activities inspired and aided an awakening among the world's oppressed people, including American Muslims. This is the result of the imam's sincerity and the public's action against tyranny and oppression. The sacrifices of our combatants at the war fronts is also an unrivaled model. These eternal and great models must be properly evaluated.

However, every living being has its calamities, and the revolution is no exception. One of its calamities is the interchangeability of friend and foe, screaming at friends and ignoring the advice of Sa'di, who said:

Treat friends with compassion and enemies with moderation.

If we consider the Guardian Council to be "Christian-like," with its miraculous birth, having come into the world contrary to expectations and without the necessary preliminaries (and this is no exaggeration), it is also a human being like Christ. It is possible that it will become ill or be beset by calamity. If we study the calamities, illnesses, shortages, and weaknesses of the revolution, this is a kind of fulfillment of responsibility. However, if we say that this revolution has no calamities or illnesses, that it is a miracle and whatever it is is good, we have made a mistake.

We agree that the revolution has many benefits, we cannot reject the great role of Imam Khomeyni (may God be pleased with him), and the numerous gains of the revolution are also clear. I also see the current leader of the revolution as a model of virtue, piety, faith and sincerity and worthy to serve as leader of the Islamic Republic. My familiarity and admiration of him do not pertain to the present but rather to the last 40 years or so. I have also known the president of the republic for 30 or 40 years. He is a positive man, a resource for the revolution and the nation, and I believe in him. These are the positive points.

All of these virtues are no obstacle to me mentioning the calamities, the weaknesses, and the objections, but I do this with the intention of overcoming the shortages and faults, which is the duty of every Iranian and revolutionary Muslim. I believe that every Iranian who cares for his country has this right, especially the revolutionary elements, who have proven their loyalty. The imam himself (peace be upon him) mentioned the shortcomings of the revolution at various points, and the current leader of the revolution issues the necessary memos at various times.

It takes courage and bravery to point out problems. When a newspaper writer seeks to discuss problems for the purpose of overcoming them, this in itself is an indication of good intentions and courage.

[AKHBAR] Where is the place of this responsibility in religious law?

[Hojjati-Kermani] In the glorious Koran and in the traditions of the saints, enjoining good and prohibiting evil is a general obligation, like other obligations. One aspect of this phenomenon is general social supervision, which is an evaluation of the first Muslims under religious law. It is incumbent upon each Muslim to avoid sin, and elements who will have an effect on delaying good things and growth in society. This obligation, like prayer and fasting, does not require permission. Likewise, no one can prevent a person from enjoining good and prohibiting evil. However, where enjoining good and prohibiting evil is accompanied with practical steps or force, this certainly must be done under the supervision of the vice-regent and the Islamic government. However, it is the duty of all to speak, give counsel and discuss sin. A newspaper writer who does not enjoin good and prohibit evil has not acted on his duty and is a sinner, because he had the possibility and did not act.

[AKHBAR] Are you talking about a place where there is a choice to be made between responsibility and interest?

[Hojjati-Kermani] Enjoining good and prohibiting evil has requirements. One is understanding what is good and what is evil. Sometimes evil things in secular life, based on discretion, are also evil under religious law, such as violating traffic and driving laws. Another requirement is that it not endanger the general interest of Islam and the Muslims, and also that it pose no mortal danger to the one who is enjoining and prohibiting. Of course there is also the time when this is done by order of the vice-regent, and there one must stand by it at risk of life; it also should be done only if a stronger interest is not endangered. For example a lie to avoid oppression is not considered to be forbidden at all, provided that it is not done to protect personal interests.

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It is correct to lie to protect interests if they are the general interests of Muslims, but if the intent is to protect personal interests (such as to prevent endangering some of one's popularity), this is a selfish interest, and here personal interests have no validity.

[AKHBAR] The intent of this question is more a matter of not submitting to the requirement to enjoin good and prohibit evil on the pretext of certain interests.

[Hojjati-Kermani] Many of our problems arise here where an individual, because of personal or group interests, refuses to speak the truth or enjoin good and prohibit evil. This is not desirable either from the standpoint of reason or religious or secular law. Society always feels a sense of praise for persons who sacrifice themselves for the interest of society, meaning people who put the truth ahead of their own rank, popularity, assets, and position.

Sometimes in this same enjoining good and prohibiting evil some people face Satanic temptations, such as persons who are not sincere and have personal intentions that are against the people, who do not accept the government's principles and sacred symbols and who apparently also have the courage to express themselves. However, others must listen to those who do accept the principles and beliefs and who express points of view.

In short, every criticism cannot be accepted; we do not consider all criticism to be constructive, nor do we consider appropriate every praise, confirmation or glorification of the revolution and its leaders.

[AKHBAR] Sometimes these positions arise from personal inferences and taste. In other words, perhaps all of the requirements you mentioned exist in correct criticism, but some people consider it to be in conflict with their own interests and thinking and act against it or attack it with the charge that it is an expression of unbelief.

[Hojjati-Kermani] This is a long discussion, especially with the problems that have been raised recently. Both sides must usually be taken into consideration in these debates. In my opinion both sides (perhaps for different reasons) are usually at fault. An example of these discussions has to do with the late Engineer Bazargan and the Freedom Front. In the period of the interim government, the period of the First Majles and also in the period since then, some people have objected, asking why the Freedom Front and the late Engineer Bazargan himself was treated that way. They consider criticism to be appropriate for that behavior.

I myself was critical of those approaches and I also voiced those criticisms. Most of the people in the Freedom Front were religious and good. However his holiness the late imam and the revolutionaries who followed him saw the Front as a form of liberal thinking that could not act properly with the revolution. I say that if there is an objection with the Freedom Front and Engineer Bazargan, this objection must be sought in the behavior of the members of the Freedom Front. Even I say that Engineer Bazargan himself was not without error in his behavior toward his holiness the imam and the revolution. The late Eng. Bazargan was sincere, believing and pious, but in his behavior, he was not without error.

The entire Freedom Front is also still the same way. I said to the members of the Freedom Front, you attack the government and the officials in such a way that one would think that the officials are a group who took the government by force and came to dominate the people. You stood against the officials as a faction fully opposed to the government. The expressions you use, such as "rulers" and "authorities," arise from this very thinking. If you accept the government, this government has everything the democratic governments have. At least it lacks none of the things they have in the United States or France. It may be that we do not recognize or act upon their procedures and political methods (!), but these officials cannot be spoken to as if they were foreigners who have seized power by force.

In the political and traditional area this thinking can be seen in the framework of the Freedom Front, and in the thinking of Dr. Sorush in the university and theoretical sector.

These people do not accept the reality that the clergy, the vice regency, and the philosophy of the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult are in charge. They are critical of both the principles and foundations and the procedures being used and what has been done. I believe that if they would reconsider their methods, many suspicions and illogical clashes would disappear. In my view, this is a middle view that can be accepted only by neutral individuals.

The Freedom Front, if you accept its system, organization, and bodies, lacks none of the world's current democratic criteria. There have been elections. Now it is possible that there are defects in the elections. These defects also exist in the very advanced nations. In other words, the exertion of influence exists everywhere, including the United States and France. Perhaps there are objections to our system in terms of some of the fine points, because of the youth of the system, but our system is one that has come to power based on the votes of the people. In other words the leader, the president of the republic, and the Majles were elected by the people, directly and indirectly, but they appear to object to the

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system of the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult. In traditional politics, the Freedom Front existed from the beginning of the revolution, and in terms of universities and theories, there is Dr. Sorush. Of course both groups are Muslim and aware elements.

In his comments, Dr. Sorush has portrayed the clergy as an aggregate that is not proper or valid under religious law. In its current form, they do not consider the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult to be Islamic. However, even if it is correct to speak in terms of replacing "vice regent" with "trustee," then the leader of the revolution, the president of the republic, the Majles, and the officials have this trusteeship. Now in the United States the president of the republic has vetoed the vote of the congress. They do not call him a dictator. He is exercising his Constitutional prerogative, and he sees that "veto" as an expression of the interest of society.

This objection is not admissible. In some cases we must give this right to the Majles, to the law, and to the leader, in accordance with that right that exists in the Constitution.

However, it is not right for someone to speak about the clergy and the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult in theoretical and intellectual terms, or the limits of the vice regency and the principle of the vice regency in such a way that it incites the people, endangers national coordination, and paralyzes the work of the nation. In other words, this has gone from the intellectual to the political and the practical.

Even in the most democratic societies, they prevent things that undermine the social system. It is possible that some of the things that are said in some societies are incorrect and must be prevented. However, on the other hand the approaches we take are also incorrect.

If the Freedom Front and Dr. Sorush say things that are against the government and social coordination, the way to oppose them is not to toss chairs in the university and bring a speech to a halt. This is not legal. In my view, both sides are making a mistake. On the one hand, I feel that both the Freedom Front and Dr. Sorush are behaving with hostility in their group and political behavior. They behave in such a way that sometimes one senses no sincerity in it. On the other hand, the approach some of us take is unworthy, conducive to riots, illogical and illegal.

In reality, what both these groups say hurts me, but since I think this is true, I will say it. I see this as a social sickness, this very intolerance. In my view, this calamity, meaning the inadmissibility of solving problems intellectually and socially, must be evaluated. I say to opponents that the procedure they have adopted has the smell of hatred, confrontation and factionalism.

[AKHBAR] This is the same thing they say against the committed technocrats. Sometimes they react harshly to certain writings and works, including your writings, and this is due to intolerance. Doesn't this harsh treatment arise from the application of the taste of a group that considers the government to be its own monopoly?

[Hojjati-Kermani] If you yourself have a responsibility, for example if you are in charge of a factory, and if you try to see that the work proceeds along good lines and to answer objections, this is not an attempt to gain a monopoly because you are in charge of this factory.

If you feel that someone wants to damage the health of this environment or to remove you from the decisionmaking position, or if you feel that there are those who are actively trying to disrupt the factory, you will not tolerate this. The officials of the Islamic Republic of Iran are faced with such a situation. I am certain that many officials had no doubts about the late Eng. Bazargan himself in terms of honesty, soundness and speaking honestly.

However, from the most radical official to the most patient, they believed that some individuals sought to undermine the system in the name of supporting the Freedom Front, meaning that they are not happy either with Islam, this system or the clergy, but in any case they have bad intentions.

I personally have faith in Dr. Sorush. Perhaps there are some among the clergy who do not believe in him. For example Mr. Azeri has plainly stated that Dr. Sorush is an infidel. I do not accept this. I answered Mr. Azeri-Qomi that that there was no reason for this denunciation as an infidel. I consider him to be a religious Muslim, and I believe that he began with his writing and speaking with a positive motivation. I do not believe that he has ulterior motives.

I have no doubt, however, that there are people with ulterior motives behind him. I do not consider that vast operation that has come to exist behind Dr. Sorush to be completely sound. Since I see this reality, definitely those who are more informed than I and who have more understanding have also known this. When he takes such harsh positions, with the understanding I have of the leader of the revolution, I have confidence that it is to preserve the government, the revolution and the existence of the government.

During the time when I served the leader of the revolution, he told me that he cannot tolerate it when there is opposition to the clergy, because he sees ulterior motives behind these tendencies. In his speeches he also

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said that the government is Islamic, and that Islamic government needs an official custodian. Otherwise, the interpretation of religion will fall into the hands of the unannointed.

I believe in the idea that from the standpoint of reason and conscience, every phenomenon needs a custodian, and that without a custodian religion cannot remain. If we select a custodian based on religion while religious law has no official person in charge, everything will fall apart. Of course it cannot be said that the clergy is above criticism. However, if the criticism is presented in such a way that it questions the principle of the existence of the clergy as the supervisor and defender and vice-regent of religion, that is where the danger begins.

However, the method of answering opponents must be correct and logical. To the extent that it pertains to those in office and the top officials, I see no deficiency, because that is both logical and inflicts no damage on the reputations of others. However, when it comes to some newspaper writer, this cannot be supervised.

A writer for a newspaper criticized the Fourth Majles, asking why it provided separate penalties for those who insult His Holiness the Prophet and those who insult the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult in two separate articles. In other words, he was saying that the Majles should have mentioned God, the Prophet and the vice-regency of the chief jurisconsult in a single article. This is a very ugly defense of the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult, meaning it is both extremist and an error, like an attack of the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult.

These defenses seek to portray the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult as being like an unparalleled despot in the world. They seek to suggest that no person can raise the slightest doubt about what is being done, whereas not even the Prophet and the saints wanted such a right for themselves.

There is also that brother clergyman who called Dr. Sorush "an empty headed philosophical pretender." Doesn't this approach set things up so that the person will receive an answer in kind, with the same load and content? Then he said that if were up to him, he would take Dr. Sorush by ear and put him on television to debate with a young seminary student, so that the 60 million people in the population could see that he has no substance. This is not the way to discuss. What Sorush says is such that it persuaded the likes of the clergy and scholars to answer him. Many professors also met and held discussions with him. We listened to what he said on the radio. He taught at the seminary.

There are problems on both sides of the debate, both with the people who rallied behind Dr. Sorush with the goal of bashing the clergy and with those who took this kind of approach. Dr. Sorush questioned the principle of the government. Perhaps he himself does not believe in such a thing. He is an innovator, a person with new ideas and vast knowledge. One cannot ask him to be a follower of things that others say. However, I protest his way of presenting issues and his militancy.

Now, Dr. Sorush's positions are not merely an intellectual trend. They have become a political trend. Unfortunately, this is a political trend that must be evaluated as one opposed to the government. The government deals with this phenomenon politically, and the approach taken was through the two political sides. When it became political, the groups poured out and shouted.

In my view if these debates had been presented logically from the very beginning and did not have the quality of a quest for vengeance, there would not have been such reactions.

[AKHBAR] How?

[Hojjati-Kermani] The legitimate objection to Dr. Sorush and the Freedom Front is that in some cases they do not come to the discussion with logic, reason, patience and tolerance. As I said at the beginning, this phenomenon came about in the beginning of the revolution, and the reason for it is the excitement that existed in the nation. After the triumph of the revolution, we should have directed this excitement towards the enemy. Instead of that however, we directed it against ourselves.

[AKHBAR] Perhaps the reason is that we have not practiced tolerating one another in the framework of political parties. If we held the same discussion in the presence of groups who believe in the government, wouldn't this tolerance be greater?

[Hojjati-Kermani] The fact that political parties have not yet gotten a foothold in our society and even the Islamic Republican Party was stopped is a long discussion. I myself did not have good experiences with the freedom of political parties in Iran. I remember well the period of the movement to nationalize oil. That freedom threatened to unravel the nation. It was based on that same freedom that the 28 Mordad [19 August] coup d'etat came about. I believe that if Dr. Mossadeq had stopped those freedoms, there would have been no coup d'etat.

After the revolution, if those unlimited freedoms had not been stopped, it is not clear where things would have gone.

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My view is that the conditions at the beginning of the revolution and that collapse of political parties and the press pulled the nation toward destruction. We have not practiced democracy like the Westerners. Therefore, because of the intolerance and to get beyond the criteria and the hostilities, the abusiveness, and the clashes, the parties will face off against one another in the form of a physical confrontation. In my view, the issues that came up during the period of the revolution and in the time of Dr. Mossadeq were a lesson for the time of the revolution, when the officials did not have the courage to bring about those freedoms. However, a way must be found so that without those dangers we will be able to undertake the formation of groups. Otherwise, I myself sense a danger to the government, national unity, and independence. This practice must be begun gradually with thought and deliberation.

[AKHBAR] What advice do you have with regard to the elections to the Fifth Majles and the soundness of the elections? What is your view particularly about the committed technocrats?

[Hojjati-Kermani] I will give you an example. In the elections for the Fourth Majles in Kerman, I suggested to two groups that the two individuals who were each from one group unite and work together. This year I have the same idea. I have the same view for the entire country and even for Tehran, even though it appears unworkable.

I have the idea that in all the groups involved in the elections, including the technocrats who are toiling, sincere, and committed to the government, should coordinate with each other and create an efficient Majles. However the existing circumstances are such that I know of 10 to 15 candidates from the leftist and rightist groups, clergy, religious technocrats, and Muslims, who if they became candidates from Kerman would win the vote and are also competent. However, none of them are running! In other words, they are not registering themselves, or they are being accused because of their political and group inclinations. This is an example for the entire nation, and there are also other places that are the same way.

Political affairs in our nation are such that the incentives for the elections are actually repellent. Our political methods, which should encourage the people to take part in the elections as much as possible, actually drive them away. Although people do take part in the elections, it is done to perform duty and responsibility.

I consider participation in the elections to be a religious and national obligation. I do not know what should be done to make the elections more lively. Perhaps supervision should be intensified and more incentive should be given to the people to take part in the elections. However perhaps this very suggestion I have made, to make a coalition between two groups, will reduce the excitement in the elections. The campaigning procedure for the elections must be a correct one. First, individuals become candidates with motivation and competence, and conditions become open for representatives of various groups to become candidates, so that no one will fear taking part; that is, they will not fear being labeled and subjected to illogical propaganda.

[AKHBAR] In every system, individuals must make themselves candidates who believe in the system. How can someone accept this responsibility who does not believe in this system?

[Hojjati-Kermani] If what is meant is not believing in the system, I am also opposed, but technicians are not necessary non-revolutionaries. It is possible that they are also very revolutionary believers in the system. Or, they may not be very revolutionary, but they may wish to become Majles deputies or officials in the interest of the system, in other words to manage a part of society's affairs.

If we are so strict that we cannot make use of Muslim specialists and technicians because they do not think 100 percent the same as us, if we are going to say that they think in a different way and we cannot tolerate them, this will be disastrous because our government needs technicians and specialists. However, if our specialist is someone who does not accept the government or is out to overthrow it, not only will our government not tolerate him, but no government will tolerate him. Even he cannot have such expectations.

We are talking about a technician who is Muslim, compassionate, loves his country, and believes in the system, but that common form is not acceptable to the government.

[AKHBAR] In any case, the discussion about the technician who is not in agreement with principles should not be raised. The question is, however: Can one remain without the need for committed technocrats in the Fifth Majles in the heart of the government, in view of the period of construction and development we are in?

[Hojjati-Kermani] This is not possible. We have always needed specialists. However, since the beginning of the revolution there has been a debate over what to do if the specialist is not committed. Yet this quality of non-commitment must not be so defined that anyone who does not think exactly the way we do is uncommitted.

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[AKHBAR] It is possible for non-commitment to exist in all the guilds and classes. Why is there such strictness concerning the uncommitted technician?

[Hojjati-Kermani] An uncommitted clergyman, an uncommitted merchant, or an uncommitted person in any profession cannot be a Majles deputy. Commitment does not mean that the person is a Salman Farsi. It means that the person is committed to the principles of the government, even though he may have other ways of thinking about some minor points or procedures.

If the issue of the technocrats has been raised, the reason is that these people are an issue in society. There is a group of technicians who think in a different way. These people who think differently intend to get into the Majles. The system says that if you do not accept me and the principles of the government, you cannot and you must not get into the Majles.

This is the true face of the issue. The barrier is to the technocrats who do not believe in the system. However, if the issue that someone should not get into the Majles who does not conform 100 percent to the prevailing thinking, this is not right. In other words the Muslim technician who is religious and who believes should have the possibility of becoming a deputy. In our society, however, because of certain requirements, the concepts have become mixed together. In other words the issue has been muddied both from the standpoint of theory and from the standpoint of the individuals who have gotten involved in the process.

Paper Issues Correction to Hojjati-Kermani Interview

96LA0105A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 27 Nov 95 p 2

[FBIS Translated Text] To the esteemed newspaper AKHBAR:

With greetings and thanks: Please order that the following corrections be printed at the beginning of your esteemed newspaper:

1. I was the representative from Kerman on the Assembly of Experts for constitutional Affairs, and now also in the second term of the Assembly of Experts for Leadership Affairs, I am the representative from Saman.

2. I was exiled in Iranshahr and Sanandaj, not Yasuj.

3. *The Lives of the Clergy of Kerman* has not yet been completed. Only hand written drafts have been prepared. The completion of this work depends on help from officials, friends, and interested parties.

4. Despite the fact that I have written many articles in the newspapers, I never consider myself a newspaper writer, especially since I have never taken and do not have any kind of material profit on this account. In the text of the interview, there are also instances where corrections are needed, of which the esteemed readers will undoubtedly take note.

With greetings to the dear brothers and esteemed readers.

Mohammad Javad Hojjati-Kermani

Governor General on Election Activities in Hamadan

96LA0107A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 27 Nov 95 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] **Hamadan, AKHBAR Correspondent—In the Administrative Council meeting of this province, the governor general of Hamadan announced: The files of individuals whose competence was rejected in the previous Majles elections will be reviewed.**

Engineer Ahmad Khorram said: The rejection of the competence of Majles candidates will be possible only in the case of proven violations, criminal record, negative political record, or documented evidence that indicates their incompetence.

He added: After the careful review of the files of these individuals, and if there is no evidence or documentation that proves that they are disqualified from participation in the elections, applicants may participate freely.

He added: During the time since the Islamic government began, revolutionary and concerned figures as well as political factions affiliated with the regime are quite recognized, and the people should not have any doubt in determining the qualified and competent individuals.

He said: The sensitivity of the Fifth Majles elections is greater than in the past, and care and the prevention of ideological infiltration by those who support liberalism and resort to Western human rights to solve the problems and concentration on domestic interests are particular requirements.

In continuation, stating that for months the elections have been heated in the province and more that 175 persons have announced their readiness to participate in the Fifth Majles elections, the governor of Hamadan added: Thirty applicants have announced that they have changed their minds about becoming candidates for various reasons, including high campaign costs.

He projected that the number of those who have changed their minds will continue to rise until Esfand [20 February-20 March] (when elections will be held).

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Deputy From Tehran on Formation, Role of Political Parties

96LA0108A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 27 Nov 95 pp 1, 3, 4, 12

[Report on interview with Engineer Mohammad Reza Bahonar, Majles deputy from Tehran, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] Engineer Mohammad Reza Bahonar, the deputy from Tehran in the Majles, born in 1331 [21 March 1952-20 March 1953], has acquired his looks and accent from Kerman.

The appointment was long and the interview time neither coincided with lunch nor dinner. It was between the two that some tea and sweets were served, as is customary with the press. It was a paltry expression of appreciation. He was not very happy with the press, which have raised the people's expectations and have not explained that we must wait several years for things to be put in order.

He completed his higher education in architecture at the Science and Industry University. He began his political career with the Islamic Republican Party and as deputy governor general of Kerman and now has reached the Board of Directors of the Majles. He now has five children.

Eng. Bahonar is a deputy who makes good use of statistics and figures and, on this basis, tells the young people not to take problems seriously, to reduce their expectations, to begin their lives, and to be certain that tomorrow will be full of success. Eng. Bahonar reads the headlines of the newspapers in the Majles bulletin of newspaper clippings and focuses on determining AKHBAR's line.

We published his interview in good text so that, God willing, we will pass his scrutiny.

[AKHBAR] Considering the imminent approach of the Fifth Majles elections and the extensive activities of the political groups, what is your opinion regarding the political organizations in the country? And essentially, how do you evaluate their role in the elections?

[Bahonar] The recent political organizations in the country are actual organizations that, unfortunately, mostly do not have clear charters, and we lack powerful official political parties for various reasons. The Islamic Republican Party because of the problems early in the revolution and due to the severe invasion by the liberals, the leftists, the Tudeh Party members, and other groups, was a collection and a front for all the forces that supported the revolution against the counterrevolutionaries. The activities of the Islamic Republican Party in countering the liberals, technocrats, Bani-Sadr, and others make it clear that this party also was not a party with positions and a charter that can separate itself from other parties within the regime.

[AKHBAR] Do you mean that the political organization had established a party?

[Bahonar] It was a political organization, but it was not a party in the sense of today. It was a faction. At one time, after the events of 1360 [20 March 1981-20 March 1982], the common enemy was omitted from the scene, and differences of opinion and interpretation were created within the party. These differences were also created among the members of the Cabinet in the government. These differences also infiltrated the Central Council of the Islamic Republican Party. Of course, the differences were not in the basic areas of the revolution.

[AKHBAR] In other words, was the party facing a split?

[Bahonar] It was not at the level of a split. Internally, there were differences of opinion that were, of course, not in terms of viewpoints and beliefs. Following the Imam, everyone cooperated in protecting the interests of the regime of the Islamic Republic in the war and other issues, but there were differences of opinion in regards to the administration of the society. This was more evident in the economic area, which existed prior to its starting inside the government as well.

[AKHBAR] Was the cabinet of Eng. Musavi the result of the agreement between the factions in the party?

[Bahonar] No. From the beginning of the revolution, we never had a party cabinet, neither the Islamic Republican Party nor a cabinet in the name of the Jame'eh-ye Rowhaniyyat-e Mobarez-e Tehran [Militant Clergy Association of Tehran].

[AKHBAR] Then, what do you mean by the difference in views regarding the administration of the country? If the [Islamic] Republican Party did not have a share in taking charge of the Executive Branch, in practice, such differences in views should not have occurred until it came to power unless there was no agreement in the cabinet.

[Bahonar] Differences of opinion began inside the cabinet.

[AKHBAR] These members were representatives of the Republican Party?

[Bahonar] No. The differences of opinion began inside the cabinet. These differences of opinion were dragged into the society and naturally to the Islamic Republican Party. Suppose, for example, Mr. Morteza Nabavi, Mr.

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Behzad Nabavi, Mr. Asgar-Owladi, and Mr. Nateq-Nuri were in the cabinet with quite different tastes and viewpoints.

[AKHBAR] Who were also members of the party.

[Bahonar] Yes, but this government was not a party government. This government was not brought to power by the Islamic Republican Party, but some members of the government were members of the Central Council of the party.

[AKHBAR] Mr. Musavi was also a member of the party. Hence, in practice, the Islamic Republican Party formed the government, unless you separate independent individuals in the Cabinet of Engineer Musavi from the Islamic Republican Party members.

[Bahonar] Mr. Behzad Nabavi was never a member of the Islamic Republican Party but was a member of Eng. Musavi's cabinet. I do not remember the names of the people in the government that Eng. Musavi formed, but there were many people who were not members of the Islamic Republican Party, such as Messrs Gharazi, Khatami, and Asghari. At that time (during the time of Martyr Ayatollah Beheshti), one of the main mottoes of the party was that our approach should not be like that of a gang.

As you will recall, after the first presidential election and the formation of the Majles, when there was talk about the late Martyr Raja'i as prime minister, he was never a member of the Islamic Republican Party, but the Islamic Republican Party and the Central Council of the party insisted that Martyr Raja'i must become the prime minister. The policy was that we have formed a party and a divine organization to better run the regime, and party affiliation should not prevent the election of the best person for the job, as in the case of presenting the prime minister and also in the formation of the members of the Cabinet. Hence, we never had a cabinet that came from the party.

Now, too, it is true of the government of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, even though he was one of the effective members of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association, and it is true for the Fourth Majles, when a faction was supported by the Militant Clergy Association, it gained the majority. Neither in the first or second term though was the cabinet and the government of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani a cabinet of the Militant Clerics Association, and it was not supposed to be such.

[AKHBAR] If we are to sum up, what indications should we take into consideration regarding the reasons for the dissolution of the Republican Party?

[Bahonar] In connection with the Islamic Republican Party, one of the main reasons was the issue that the Islamic Republican Party was not a party in today's sense. Within the government and the regime, it is natural for 4, 5, or 10 powerful parties to exist, which have accepted the basis of Islam, the revolution, and religious guardianship. But, unfortunately, so far, this has not occurred in our society.

[AKHBAR] Then you evaluate the activities of the parties positively?

[Bahonar] I believe that if a parliamentary regime wants to act truly democratically and on the basis of Islamic conditions, it must attract the vote of the people and be trustworthy, and the Majles must be created on the basis of people's votes. It seems to me that the sooner we come to a situation where people do not respond to individuals but respond to ideas and parties, and parties and ideas are what they deal with, the sooner the economic and political problems will be solved. Otherwise, the people will elect one person for one term and another person for another term and then elect others, and in the end we will not know who was better, especially since not all the people's expectations are lawful and legal, that is, the voters have certain expectations of the deputy which do not conform to the Constitution, therefore, a sort of conflict is created. In other words, the deputy does not know whether to follow what the people expect or take the interests of the public and general interests of the regime into consideration. Hence, the sooner parties are formed with clear positions and precise policy lines, the better. It is more desirable for people to choose between ideas.

[AKHBAR] There are different views in regards to why parties do not take shape in our country, and if they take shape, they do not last. Some believe that historically, we do not have positive experiences with the formation of parties.

[Bahonar] Yes, there are a variety of reasons as to why parties are not created and do not last. One of the main reasons is the unpleasant history of the operation of parties. There were parties that were created on the basis of individuals; when the individuals left, the parties went with them. There were also parties that, despite having distinguished people, were not recognized as parties by the people, and, unfortunately, such parties did not have a desirable outcome. This included the Tudeh Party that had gained a reputation, but this reputation was hated, and the party was afflicted with foreigners so people dismissed it.

[AKHBAR] Considering that we are at the start of the elections, noting the conditions of the political

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organizations in our country, do you think that we will witness the establishment of official parties soon?

[Bahonar] Official parties have already been established. We have parties, such as the Islamic Coalition Society. The Mojahedin of the Islamic Revolution Organization of Iran is a party, but the Militant Clergy Association is not a party because the clergy in our country have a particular and unique definition. Of course, five clerics may gather in the future and establish a party, but the Tehran Militant Clergy Association is not a party. Its leaders, the members of its central council, and its secretary general believe that we are not a party and do not want to be.

[AKHBAR] In other words, in your opinion, the particular definition of the clergy in our country prevents the formation of a party?

[Bahonar] No. If parties are established and are compatible with the policy of the Militant Clergy Association, the Tehran Militant Clergy Association will support them. The Tehran Militant Clergy Association is not a party by nature. It is a collection of people who in the course of the history of our country have had a particular role and relationship with the people. Their competence, immunity, and the strong trust that the people have in them and our Islamic regime that has strong relations with the clerics, which crystallizes in guardianship and religious guardianship, and the trust of the people in guardianship, they feel and believe that the clerics must not be a political party in the society, but five clerics may in the future get together and establish a party.

[AKHBAR] Political party is a Western phenomenon, as is the parliamentary system, but if we accept the parliamentary system, we must also accept its side effects. You agree, too. When we reach the special definition of the place of the clergy and its relationship with parties, it becomes problematic.

[Bahonar] We strongly oppose the view that the status of the clergy is above getting involved in the issues. A great many of the key positions of the country are not in the hands of the clerics. We do not at all accept the climate that wants to wrap the clerics in tinsel for some day when they are needed by saying that it is beneath the status of the clergy and that they should remain respectable. What the clerics want to do, how they want to act, is how we accept the clerics and work under the umbrella of the clergy. We are not a member of the clergy. What does the Tehran Militant Clergy Association, for instance, do? Or what does the Tehran Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyyun-e Mobarez] do? You can talk to them. They probably have a spokesman as well. We accept the clergy in this condition and work with them. As far as we know, the Tehran Militant Clergy Association does not intend to become a party.

Perhaps for this reason, the Militant Clerics Society also faced a problem. It was faced with an organization and could not figure out what it should do. Our problem is that since we have a form in mind regarding a party, the clergy cannot be placed in this form. Now, we can change the form, that is, we can say that it can be a party. Suppose there is an organization in the West similar to the clergy, whatever we want to call it. If the clergy is not a party, there are two basic problems. Sometimes the clergy is organized in order to be a dividing line between the opponents of the regime, as happened in the Islamic Republican Party. There is a time when there are different interpretations regarding these same principles of the regime. Hence, suppose that the Militant Clergy Association becomes like a party. The benefit of it is that if a person wants to vote for the Militant Clergy Association as a party, he will vote for the candidates of the Association.

I feel that the Militant Clergy Association has a series of candidates who in a sense transmit the viewpoints of the Association. I even know that some of the gentlemen want to be on the list with the motto of coordination with the Militant Clergy Association. In other words, the Militant Clergy Association is not restricted to itself and its members. It might support any pious individual.

[AKHBAR] Well, what if the Militant Clerics Society takes members like a party?

[Bahonar] You should have this discussion with the clergy, but I say, simply, that the clergy has a particular status among the people, which has created a mutual relationship and belief and may not be very interested in getting involved in the details of economic and political issues. Then, for instance, we set boundaries that in the Second Plan you must distribute so many coupons or eliminate this amount of subsidy. Also, because of the mutual belief that exists between the clergy and the people, it wants to be the guide and protector of the people. If the clergy wants to become a party, there will be a series of parties before it. Our government is a religious government. As long as the religious government exists, saying that the clergy has formed the Majles, or the government and has failed at one point in time or that the clergy has been victorious, is a government issue and not a guidance one. In other words, the clergy is not after taking control of the government to want to establish a Majles, monopolize and establish a government, and set the rest aside. If 10 parties are established in our country and even have different positions, the clergy may endorse five of these

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parties, because it does not consider a closed definition of some of the issues at all in our interest.

[AKHBAR] If the Militant Clerics Society supports a coalition government and this government is not successful in its actions, how would you explain the issue of accepting responsibility?

[Bahonar] When the clergy supports Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, it does not believe at all that it should oblige Mr. Rafsanjani to form his government in a particular way. It presents Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani as a revolutionary, anti-imperialist, and just person, a person with a long political history, who is known as a competent person in the society in the formation of many of the positions of the regime. Afterward the Militant Clergy Association will never oblige Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani, since he is a member of the clergy organization, to support a government of the clergy and say that he must have a particular person as minister of agriculture. It would not play the role of a partisan who is after centralization of power. It only advises and guides the people.

Today's definitions of a party are not compatible with the role of the clergy. Second, the clergy has a spokesman. If you ask me, I will say that I do not find it expedient for the Militant Clergy Association to become a party by the name of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association or any other name and establish a party so that one group is the clergy and the other anti-clergy. If in one term they do not win, it would mean that we should abandon the religious government.

[AKHBAR] What percentage of the candidates of the Militant Clergy Association were in the Fourth Majles?

[Bahonar] In Tehran, 30 candidates were presented. In the provincial cities, the Tehran Militant Clergy Association did not present candidates, but if individuals who supported the Tehran Militant Clergy Association contacted Shiraz, for example, when there were 20 candidates, and asked which one the Association preferred, it would name 30 people and say that among the 30 people these three are better. The Tehran Militant Clergy Association, however, would never accept members like a party, provide a line, polish a candidate's ideas and then determine that he is appropriate for a position and can be a suitable governor for this party, a Majles deputy, a minister, or a good president. The Tehran Militant Clergy Association would not carry out these duties. It is not after taking members and private training and education.

[AKHBAR] The Militant Clergy Association was formed on the basis of ideology. You say that it does not act like a party in its particular sense, but the Militant Clergy Association has meetings, explains its position, and as a result has a particular line of thinking. It elects certain individuals to support this thinking, and it has a university that is active.

[Bahonar] These suppositions are not correct. In other words, the university that you say the Tehran Militant Clergy Association has is in fact the Imam Sadeq University, which does not belong to the Tehran Militant Clergy Association. In other words, without a doubt, the Imam Sadeq University has no relationship with the Tehran Militant Clergy Association. The president of the Imam Sadeq University is Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani and not the secretary general of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association. Mr. Mahdavi-Kani has a university called the Imam Sadeq University. It is possible that not even one of those educated in the Imam Sadeq University will be in the Tehran list for the two, three, or four terms in the future. If a party wants to have a university, which it should, it is fine, and we do not negate such actions. It should have a university, but the Imam Sadeq University, whose students mostly study in three fields—Islamic culture and propagation, economics, and philosophy and political science—can such a university create a cadre for a government?

[AKHBAR] In other words, it is training forces for the three main pillars of running a government.

[Bahonar] No, this should not be concluded. Of course, if it is so, we welcome it.

[AKHBAR] Even though the Tehran Militant Clergy Association is not regarded as a party and has no charter and bylaws, in practice, many of the political organizations believe that it functions as a party, is no different from a party, and is different in name only.

[Bahonar] If you want to extend this issue, we would have problems. In other words, take into consideration a congregational prayer imam of a mosque who has influence, whose words are influential in an area. He might say to those who come to his congregational prayers to vote for some person and do not vote for another. He has not necessarily established a party to try to control the Majles and the government, for him to have an economic program and a political program. In our society, the clergy is a group that is trusted by the people.

If you want to place the clergy in this framework, you shall see that if it wants to do party work, it must establish a party. A cleric says that if anyone asks him, there are 50 candidates in Kerman, which one should I vote for, you say that if a cleric tells him to vote for a particular person, he has operated as a party.

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The clergy is a stratum that is trusted in our society. People go to them to solve personal and social problems, and they are consulted by the people.

Now, can you find the role of the congregational prayer imam in France? Can you find it in the United States? Can you find it in China? Hence, such a definition may not exist anywhere else in the world.

[AKHBAR] We also have an opposing faction called the Militant Clerics Society.

[Bahonar] Well, our understanding is that they made a mistake. They wanted to establish a party, and it did not work. This is exactly what we say. In other words, the Militant Clerics Society separated from the clergy to establish a party, but it did not work.

I tell you, even prior to the revolution, the Militant Clergy Association did not do party work. In other words, the Imam was not the secretary general of the party, and the clergy, Martyr Beheshti, Martyr Motahhari, and Martyr Mofattah were not a party when they worked against the shah.

The most important reasoning is that, as soon as they became victorious and the revolution reached fruition, they called on the Freedom Movement and asked it to form a government. If it were a party, was active, and ousted the shah, well, it would have been rational to say that the government belonged to it, but it handed it over altogether.

It handed it over altogether to a group of people that it considered pious and able to operate the government under the supervision of the religious guardian and the imam. After a year or two, it became clear that they did not agree to a religious government. Hence, they were omitted.

[AKHBAR] Hence...

[Bahonar] No, the imam in the first two terms prohibited the clergy from becoming candidates for president. Even after Bani-Sadr, the Imam did not permit the clerics to become candidates, so Martyr Raja'i became the candidate. It was after the events on 7 Tir [28 June] and 8 Shahrivar [30 August] and other problems and severe political disturbances that the imam even reluctantly permitted Ayatollah Khamene'i to become a presidential candidate. The clergy was not supposed to start a revolution and then say that all is under its control.

When you say that before the revolution the clerics acted as a party, I want to say that the role of the clergy is no different now than before the revolution. Before the revolution, it fought a debauched government to establish a pious government, and now it is after having a pious government in power, whether or not it is clerical.

[AKHBAR] Considering what you have said, then the Militant Clergy Association is not a party and will not become a party. The Militant Clerics Society wanted to become a party and therefore failed. Will any organization be established at the beginning of the elections with the support of these two groups or not?

[Bahonar] No organization will be created. I do not have any list of the organizations of the Tehran Militant Clergy Association. I have no contacts. As far as I know, the Tehran Militant Clergy Association, as before, will probably introduce 30 candidates to Tehran. The rest of the political groups and organizations who are in the opposition say different things. Some say they will, and some say they will not introduce candidates. We feel that two parallel lines are active together. On the one hand, they propagate against the actions of the Fourth Majles and the government. They question the actions of the government in various dimensions and even the actions of the Fourth Majles in order to be able to create a change in the nature of the Fifth Majles. In other words, they want to change the present candidates, the present deputies, or the present thinking that holds the majority in the Fourth Majles. This is one line. They hold interviews; they make speeches. Alongside these there is another propaganda line that says that the elections are not free. My understanding is that these two parallel lines will get closer to one another until a month, 20 days, 35 days before the elections. If what they say about the Fourth Majles and about the government is accepted in the society and welcomed by the people, they will introduce candidates, give a list, and engage in campaigning and saying, vote for these people. If they see that such talk finds no takers, they will say, we do not offer candidates, the elections are monopolized, and the elections are unsound. This is the same story that has existed since the beginning of the revolution.

[AKHBAR] Who are the people who question?

[Bahonar] You know. You have interviewed everybody.

[AKHBAR] Is it possible for you to know an organization and not know its name?

[Bahonar] No. I know their names. I say that their newspapers or weekly journals claim that the future elections may be unsound. Let us see what happens. Should we or should we not participate? SALAM newspaper regularly discusses whether or not the next elections will be sound. Should we be there or not? There are weekly journals, like IRAN-E FARDA, which essentially say that the elections are unsound. Even the

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banned NEHZAT-E AZADI says that if the climate of the elections is good, we will participate, and if not we will not. Therefore, two propaganda lines move parallel to one another. Elections have such problems, and they will decide by about a month before the elections. If they see that what they say has takers and the people turn away from the present Majles and government, etc., they will come to the field with all their might and present candidates, and if they see that they were not received well. [sentence as published] Well now I believe that, as a political group, what they say is very repetitive, and the people have experienced these statements in the past.

Hence, most likely they feel that the people are not receptive to them and they will claim that the elections are unsound.

At most, some people recently have been saying, we vote but do not present candidates. We participate in the elections, but it is meaningless for a political party or a political organization to vote, to have 20 or 25 members. They say, On election day, we will go and drop our votes in the ballot boxes. Well, a housewife also goes and votes. A 16 year old young man also goes and votes. This is no great talent. If a political organization does not give a list, it becomes clear that it has embargoed the elections, that is, it does not want to participate in the elections.

[AKHBAR] You now said that these groups that want to question the government somehow or question the actions of the Majles in terms of propaganda reached certain points of weakness. It must be admitted that the government and the Majles have had weaknesses concerning some issues in these four years.

Do you not think that the propaganda of this group, considering this point, will affect people's thinking somewhat?

[Bahonar] Here we can go back to the role of the press in the society and the role of the intellectuals and those who understand the issues better and can be active in giving direction to public opinion. There are two types of people under the power of our management. We can operate the country on the basis of two policies. One is from the perspective of our emotion and tenderness, and another from the perspective of wisdom. Most people may, in the short term, prefer the perspective of tenderness. For example, if you ask a family of five, with the savings that we have, should we go on summer vacation or make a down payment on a house, many may say that it is better for us to manage our present situation. Tomorrow, God will be generous. And this expression is repeated a lot. You have set the premise that things have gotten worse. We do not accept this at all. There are times when there is a lot of propaganda that development is not compatible with justice; the more we move toward development, the more justice is reduced. If you take this issue to an urban family and look at it, this may be true. There is a time when, from the perspective or a ruler who wants to operate the society on the basis of wisdom, you raise the angle of your vision, you raise the angle to the future generations.

When I lived in Tehran 20 years ago, I had five children. All five children were going to the university and school, which were free of charge, and I had a bureaucratic job, at which out of eight hours of work, I would do an hour and 20 minutes of useful work and at the end of the month would get my salary, and my living was managed. Where has this pressure gone? Is there an answer? If you look from the perspective of the president, from the perspective of the Majles, he is the representative of 60 million people. This deputy represents 40 percent of urban dwellers. Well, if you look at this, of course, I am talking about all the operations of the regime. We have more actual examples. Early in the revolution, there was no provincial city that we would visit where they would tell us that 10 percent or 5 percent of the city has electricity or roads. Today, there is no city that we visit that would not say that 70 to 75 percent and even 95 percent have water, electricity, teachers, and schools. This is one issue. Another issue is that a great change occurred in our economy since 1350 [21 March 1971-20 March 1972], so that within one year, the price of our oil increased by three to four times. In other words, the $3.50 of 1349 [21 March 1970-20 March 1971] reached $11 in 1351 [21 March 1972-20 March 1973]. This was the maximum point of the jump that occurred in the price of oil. This jump came down at an angle within 20 years until, in short, today, the per capita income of an Iranian is at the price prior to the oil revenues, one-fifth of 20 years ago. In other words, if in 1353 [21 March 1974-20 March 1975], 20 tumans of oil revenues went to each Iranian citizen, today it is 1 tuman; next year it will be 9 rials, and in 10 years it will reach 3 rials—we say in 10 years and some say in 12 or 13 years. There is not a great deal of difference of opinion. In 12 years, we will not have any revenues from the sale of crude oil. At that time, we will either have to abandon oil or oil will abandon us. When you say that the situation of the people has worsened, in 1368 [21 March 1989-20 March 1990], we lived in Tehran, and we had six hours of blackout every 24 hours. In other words, 25 percent of the gross domestic product had problems. If we had not invested in oil and electricity, today, based on the same timetable, we should be having 12 hours of blackout.

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[AKHBAR] This issue concerns an overall policy, but on the other hand, we have a short-term policy.

We mentioned electricity. This is an infrastructure policy and is a part of the indices of development. A country that intends to go through this course must make investments. No one denies such investments and even the efforts of the Fourth Majles in the Second Five-Year Plan on the same basis, but the question that was raised is the experience of other countries that have undergone the recognized developmental models shows that in the short term, with protective policies, the effects and consequences of the overall policies can be reduced in the society. For example, inflation can be controlled. As a deputy of the people, what steps have you taken in this connection?

[Bahonar] I believe that if a faction creates the idea in the people that there is a person, an idea, or a plan that can solve the problems throughout the country within two or three years, that faction either does not understand economics or is lying.

But in the economic programs, whether long-term or short-term, the issues revolve around 45 percent and 50 percent. If someone says, I will solve 90 percent of the problems, he is either ignorant or not telling the truth. The difference is that we say we will overcome 55 percent of the problems, our rival says 45 percent. In a country whose per capita income compared to 20 years ago has been reduced to 1/20, a country whose development and infrastructure construction have increased by 20 times, a country whose population is 2.5 times that of prior to the revolution, the total production of steel in our country, after coming out of the war and when the war ended, was a total of 500,000 tons, and today we produce nearly 5 million tons of steel.

Our petrochemical production was 700,000 tons. We have reached 8 million tons.

In order not to have 12 hours of blackout, do you know how much we invested?

As much as it would have taken to give 4 kg of free chicken to 10 million families every month for three years. It is calculated in this way, and this was an investment in electricity that many people may not have liked.

If we had not invested in electricity and instead bought chicken, the chicken would not reach the homes safely, because there was no electricity, all of it would spoil. In other words, the factories would stop, the ports would be paralyzed, the steel mills and copper and aluminum smelters would shut down.

Of the workers who are now working, 50 percent would be unemployed. Half of the wheat that is produced now would not be produced and thousands of things would occur. Or, for instance, in regards to social security. [sentence as published]

[AKHBAR] Can you live on an employee's salary in rental housing in Tehran? Can your children go even to government schools, and can you manage a family of seven?

[Bahonar] If you tell people that a desirable house for a Japanese with a per capita income several times that of an Iranian is a 40 square meter apartment, and in our country the desirable house for a newly-married couple is a 120 square meter apartment, and we tell people that with these oil revenues, with this gross domestic product, given this situation, we do not have the right to consume 20 million tons of fruit and vegetables. In fact, we do not have the right to such uncontrolled consumption. We consume 20 million tons of fruit and vegetables in the country every year. We say that the wealthy consume it, without question.

[AKHBAR] Do you mean that there is no question regarding consumption?

[Bahonar] This per capita consumption exceeds that of Europe. In other words, we consume more fruit than Germany, which now has the most thriving economy in the world. The per capita consumption of housing, energy, and medicine is also high, in a country where the maximum per capita income is $900, $800, or $700. In some areas, it has a higher consumption than countries whose per capita annual income is $20,000.

We want to say that it is not possible for one person to work and eight people to consume. In short, I want to say that that time has passed. In our country, one person can no longer manage a family of eight. It is not possible.

[AKHBAR] We can conclude from what you say, since you also referred to the role of the press, that the people's expectations are high and we, the press, have not played a positive role in this connection. Why?

[Bahonar] I do not know. I am an architectural engineer. My wife is an electrical engineer. We married in 1358 [21 March 1979-20 March 1980]. We bought all our appliances and took them home. There were four or five items, and we rented our home. Today, that same place rents for 8,000 tumans. We were in Kerman. We lived in that house for two years. We did not expect any more.

[AKHBAR] Do you know the present price of these four items?

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[Bahonar] I do. Why do you not look at the house? I say, today, two people with high school diplomas who want to get married together and have no jobs do not want to live in two rooms. I bought four items of goods, no one is satisfied with these four items today.

Today, there are two families, two couples with high school diplomas who want to start their lives, would they agree to start with machine-made carpets, with one gas stove, one refrigerator, and an electric fan?

[AKHBAR] Well, people's expectations have gone up.

[Bahonar] Well, you should solve it. I say, you, as people who are concerned with the people, as the intellectuals of the society, you must inculcate in the people that in a country with such a per capita income, in such a country, one cannot live like a rich kid.

[AKHBAR] The generation of the revolution has expectations. Communication creates expectations in the people.

Television, the press, and radio advertise consumption because it is supposed to increase, and this advertisement will result in advertisement for consumption. It is not only the press, but the Majles deputies and the officials of the country who have created this expectation. When they advertised for political competition, the people's expectations went up. This is not only the problem of the newspapers, it is the whole country. Naturally, the revolution created fundamental changes in the country. Wanting a better life is also a part of it. A problem that may bother the people in some instances could be the imposition of viewpoints. One viewpoint restricts social freedoms at times. Do you not think that we would get better results if we let the people be free in these respects?

[Bahonar] Of course, in our country, within the past year, I do not know the actual figure, but about 100 officials had written against the president in the press. They had written more than 1,000 articles, news items, and headlines against the president. Which country allows this much freedom? They say all this very easily; they make these speeches. Now, in some of the press, the religious government is seriously questioned. Do you mean there should be even more freedom?

[AKHBAR] The point that came up is the number of articles that you referred to. What effect did they have on the actions?

[Bahonar] If you mean, within this period, for instance, how much were the salaries of employees raised, we say we should look at the issues somewhat from the perspective of wisdom. We cannot spend on other sectors instead of infrastructure investments. After all, actions are based on a philosophy. We must not change the actions because of pressure by the press. We can only respond to you that what we do is for this reason, but if you think that as a result of the pressure of the press we would give up the infrastructure programs, I say, no.

[AKHBAR] Do you not consider the press to be the representative of public opinion?

[Bahonar] I say that the press can be the representative of public opinion and create it.

[AKHBAR] Well, we also face the problem of the audience.

[Bahonar] To the same extent, too, you can introduce a series of issues into the society. In other words, it is a two-way relationship.

[AKHBAR] Mr. Bahonar, despite some of its differences of opinion with the government, the Fourth Majles also created a good relationship with the government. How did you solve these differences?

[Bahonar] It is a good issue. One of our claims in the Fourth Majles, which we say was an unprecedented movement, was that we dragged the disturbances from within the society and the press to the expert meetings. In other words, we tried to make the relationship with the government a national relationship based on wisdom and not emotions. Both in opposition and agreements, the Imam insisted that the Majles must make use of expert opinion. But the grand leader also emphasizes this issue. After all, I have the honor of having served in three Majles terms. I have seen various Majles terms, except for the first term. There was a time when many committees in the Majles would be the target of the anger of government expert opinion. There was a time that the Majles had a specific position with regard to the government and would not pay attention to the reasoning of the experts at all. In other words, we saw movements from one extreme to the other, both when the Majles said yes and when it said no. The amount that was supposed to be on the basis of logic, reasoning, expert opinion, numbers, figures, and statistics did not occur much. In the Fourth Majles, we made great strides toward having a logical and rational relationship, and now we needed a series of facilities. For example, we created the Majles Research Center. We needed a series of publications in the Majles. For instance, in the Second Plan, I would say that at least 100 research articles were published among the Majles deputies in the course of the examination of the plan.

I say that if we changed the opinion of the government in the plan bill in some [illegible]es, it rarely occurred for us to say, you are the government and must offer a bill,

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and we are the Majles and can do whatever we please. This atmosphere did not exist between the government and the Majles. Many of the policies of the Second Plan were in the bill and were changed in the Majles, but it was mostly by agreement.

[AKHBAR] But the Second Plan came to the Majles as an industrial one and left the Majles as an agricultural one.

[Bahonar] This is absolutely true. I say that the Second Plan was changed in the Majles much more than the First Plan. In the first plan, the government bill that came to the Majles was at most the same as when it left the Majles. When the Second Plan came to the Majles, it was heavily changed in nature. We modified the government economic modification policies. We reduced the speed of modification.

The question that you asked, what was done for the people, this is what was done. But we did not make a lot of noise about it.

[AKHBAR] Why not, as a deputy of the people?

[Bahonar] There is a time that we want to engage in political action against the government. I must say that it is different. The government wanted to increase prices. We did not allow it. We did not want to engage in political work. We consider Mr. Hashemi personally to be much closer to the revolution than ourselves. We consider him to be on the Board of Trustees of the revolution, and I am his follower. The issue was not to say that the government has done this, and the Majles has done that, and therefore the Majles supports the people or the government. We had no such argument.

[AKHBAR] Mr. Bahonar, you defended the actions of the Majles and also the actions of the government, but you did not discuss the actions of the press very much. What is your evaluation of the present position of the press in the country?

[Bahonar] We consider the press as a good lever for raising the cultural level of the society and consider it a necessity for the revolution. The press must not be made to order. In fact, they should be the spokesman of the people. Even the press themselves have opinions. In other words, at the present, in our country, political parties are not very powerful. In practice, every newspaper represents one kind of thought. What is missing is the people. There should be a newspaper which reports all the aspects of what people say. Of course, we must also interpret the people. I say that the daily newspapers now, from early morning, including AKHBAR, HAMSHAHRI, IRAN, and SALAM, to afternoon, including KEYHAN, ETTELA'AT, and RESALAT, each represent and are the organ of one thought. We wanted, in the beginning when AKHBAR was published, to see what they wanted to say. When IRAN was published, everyone said that it is the spokesman of the government.

[AKHBAR] What about a newspaper that discusses everything?

[Bahonar] It is a bad thing not to have a line. On the one hand, you say that it must say what people want. It is proper for a journalist to be without a line and say, I report whatever anybody says from anywhere. After all, a person has a line. After all, we say that if some person becomes a minister, he should not act on the basis of a line, but it is not good for a minister not to have a line.

[AKHBAR] One of the morning newspapers that you mentioned is considered leftist.

[Bahonar] In being leftist, one has to have a position. In other words, merely opposition would not mean leftist. The left must also have a position. PAYAM-E DANESHJU complained more; that is, it attacked you.

There were committed people among the technocrats who said, we accept religious guardianship, we accept the religious government, but you cannot operate the country by public opinion. In other words, this was their main argument, but the same people who spoke, you can bring each one of them and ask them their opinion in regards to the United States. Ask them their opinion about antireligious ideas. Is their opinion regarding economic priorities not development? All of them can be brought in, but naturally, tomorrow in the elections, the issue of opposition to religious guardianship will not be a winning card. Naturally, they say we support religious guardianship, and absolute religious guardianship for that matter, but it is in practice and in the past positions that we can make a determination. Being a technocrat does not automatically mean being against values, rather, it is what the society needs.

Now, the present government has increased the capacity of our universities within eight years from 350,000 students to 800,000 students. That is, the number has more than doubled within five years. This means that we need technocrats, to train them and spend the national budget on them.

But there is a person who says all of this to deny religious government. In other words, he places the technocrats against the religious government and says that foreign relations have an alphabet, and a protocol that must be observed. With such reasoning, you cannot oppose the United States, and there is no problem if we do not negotiate. Or another says that at the present we have a series of defined relationships, and there is no problem if we establish diplomatic relations according

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to a timetable. For example, we might be forced to accept GATT tomorrow, but what is important is how we join it. In short, by reasoning, he wants to prepare the grounds for relations with the United States, whereas the grand leader has drawn a red line on the other side. I might have a different view and the gentlemen have another view. The issue that the technocrats raise is something else. The term technocrat represents a person who prefers technique and sciences over religion. Otherwise, we would not accept a religion that ignores the problems of today. There is a time when a person wants to implement scientific management vis-a-vis religious jurisprudential and religious management. This is where our basic differences start. In connection with the press, the press that have an ideology and have good ideas, the higher the number of the press in our society, the better. It is better no matter how the quality goes up, but there is a person who goes and only addresses the negative points, sets them forth and wants to drag the economic issues to political issues. He only knows politics, and work policy for that matter, not political policy. Work policy is a term that has a specific meaning in our time. It means having an unfair political discussion. This is harmful. Of course, our regime and government is solid enough to hear the statements of the opposition and tolerate them, but there are also red lines. Those red lines exist everywhere. During the war, it is a red line to speak against the war. In other words, there is a physical and not an ideological reaction. It does not tolerate discussions, debates, and arguments. During the war that we went through, the Imam said the war was at the top of all the affairs. At such a time, the issue is not whether this war is in our interest or to our detriment. There, the religious guardian issues a decree. He announces a decree. Arguing about it is prohibited.

[AKHBAR] Where is the red line at the present time?

[Bahonar] If the religious guardian issues certain opinions, if it is advice, we can discuss the advice. For example, at the present, the opinion of Ayatollah Khamene'i about relations with the United States is a red light. Can we start a series of issues in the press that it is beneficial to have relations with the United States? Yes, we know that it is beneficial to have relations with the United States, but its detrimental effects outweigh the benefits.

Now, the press should attack the benefits of relations with the United States and create a climate in the society. This is the red line. This is clear. But if someone says that the Fourth Majles worked poorly, well, he has a right to say so. He can reason and say that the government has worked poorly. The government has worked weakly. But if he discusses the dignity of a group, for example, one person in the Majles who is involved in misappropriation, if a newspaper wants to expose him, it has a right to say that Mohammad Reza Bahonar, the deputy from Tehran, has been involved in misappropriation. If the same newspaper says that the Majles deputies were involved in misappropriation, however, well, it is a red line. This means questioning the institution of the Majles, the institution of the government.

[AKHBAR] Which newspaper do you read more or first?

[Bahonar] I do not see beyond the first-page headlines of many of the newspapers. If on the first page, there is a reference to an article of interest, I will read it. Of course, because I am a member of the Board of Directors of the Majles, the brothers in Public Relations go to the trouble of clipping out articles, which I read, and if necessary I read the original issues in the daily newspapers.

Iran's Davudi-Shamsi Says Independents Will Gain Seats

96LA0109A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 28 Nov 95 pp 1, 2

[Report on interview with Seyyed Esma'il Davudi-Shamsi, deputy from Ardakan, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] **AKHBAR NEWS NETWORK—Seyyed Esma'il Davudi-Shamsi the deputy from Ardakan in the Majles said: In the next elections of the Majles, a significant number of seats will go to independent candidates and new faces.**

The member of the Planning and Budget Committee of the Majles said in an interview with AKHBAR's parliamentary correspondent: Most people think that despite a great deal of effort to solve the problems, the Fourth Majles has not functioned well, particularly in the area of economic issues, and this issue will have an effect on the composition of the Fifth Majles.

He added: The calm atmosphere of the Fourth Majles and also the lack of differences of opinion and arguments and doubts among the deputies in the Majles have caused most of the people in our society not to be sufficiently informed about the actions of the Majles during this term.

He added: The people usually note particular movements in the Majles, and some who have problems expect important changes such as the change of government to take place, whereas, none of these occurred in the Fourth Majles.

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He said: Also, many people believe that the Majles has been marginalized with regard to many issues of the country, including solving the economic problems, and does not take positions.

He explained: Under the present conditions, the people, on the one hand, are after candidates who approach the existing problems of the country frankly, and, on the other hand, it is projected that the next Majles in terms of specialization will be stronger than the Fourth Majles.

Davudi-Shamsi added in regards to the existing ideological and political factions in the Majles: At the present, the majority faction (Militant Clergy [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyyat-e Mobarez]), the minority (Militant Clerics [Majma'e Rowhaniyyun-e Mobarez]), and also about 100 independent deputies exist in the Majles.

He added: The independents act without affiliation with the majority and minority factions, but sometimes with leanings toward one of the two factions in ratifying the bills and proposals and in their speeches.

He said: Since no person or group has been able to gather and organize them in the form of a party or organization, the independents have not been able to create a faction.

Regarding the possibility of the technocrats coming to the Fifth Majles, he said: If what is meant by technocrats are those who want the separation of religion and politics or specialization without commitment, these individuals will certainly not come to the Majles, but the number of committed and specialized deputies will increase in the next Majles.

In response to the question of why the Militant Clerics Society will not present candidates for the next Majles, he added: Lack of a coherent and organized overall organization of the Militant Clerics Society and those who support this society in the recent years has caused this society not to be ready for the next elections.

He added: Of course, the supporters of the Militant Clerics Society will participate in the Fifth Majles elections individually, particularly in the provincial cities.

Iran's Angaji on Importance of Political Parties

96IA0110A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 30 Nov 95 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR News Network—Dr. Seyyed Javad Angaji, member of the Islamic Consultative Majles Speaker's Council, said: The nation's executive and high officials must accept the necessity to form political parties and the society's need for political parties.

In an interview with AKHBAR's parliamentary correspondent, Dr. Angaji said: The lack of active political parties and deputies who support political parties in the Majles has caused the expressions of opinion on various subjects by most of the deputies to lack the necessary preparation and forethought.

He believes: A deputy who expresses views or advances proposals in the Majles on various issues as a member of a political party, will definitely do so based on an expert intellectual foundation.

According to him, even now, due to the existence of 270 kinds of preferences and personal analyses lacking expert work, the deputies are effectively faced with a problem in organizing the votes for the legislative power.

He added: The lack of expert work on programs and proposals, and their not having a party intellectual foundation means that even the executive power officials are faced with problems in the implementation of the laws that have been enacted.

He added: Likewise, due to the lack of active political parties in the country and the failure to stipulate fully ways of thinking and policies and procedures, the people are at a loss in the elections in electing the candidates or the way of thinking that they want.

Dr. Angaji emphasized: In view of the aforementioned issues and society's need for political parties, our nation must move in the direction of creating active political parties and organizations.

He believes: If the political ideas and the various views of the Majles deputies and even political observers could be formed in the framework of several parties, then definitely the decisions in making comprehensive and complete laws and also their implementation by the executive officials would face far fewer problems.

He was asked whether the existing factions in the Majles effectively do the work of political parties. He added: The majority faction (the Militant Clergy Association [Jame-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez]) and the minority faction (the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez]) are not a political party. Rather, they are considered a way of thinking.

He added: The rightist faction (the majority) and the leftist faction (the minority) represent a way of thinking which in its roots and on principle is the same, but these two factions disagree on methods and details such as aid (subsidies), the program for exports of non-oil goods provided in the Second Five-Year Plan and other things.

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The member of the Islamic Consultative Majles Speaker's Council discussed the outer limits of party activity in the country. He said: Organized or formed political parties must work to be present in the political arenas, to get more votes and to be vigorous.

Dr. Angaji, deputy from Tabriz in the Islamic Consultative Majles, was asked which faction has the better chance of getting into the forthcoming Majles. He said: In the municipalities, because the people know their deputies, the likelihood of the same current deputies being reelected is relatively high.

Therefore, according to Dr. Angaji, in Tehran and the large municipalities, due to the difficulty of fully presenting all the candidates to the voters, it will not be easy for new deputy candidates to get into the Majles.

Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammadi-Reyshahri on Islamic Party

96LA0113A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 3 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

["Question and answer session" with Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammadi-Reyshahri at the Teacher Training University; date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR News Network—Hojjat ol-Eslam val-Moslemin Mohammadi-Reyshahri took part in a question and answer session at the Teacher Training University, and answered student questions. In this session he answered questions about the letters exchanged between his holiness the imam and Mr. Montazeri, as well as the elections.

[Question] In your book *Political Memoirs*, why is it that the letters exchanged between his holiness the imam and Mr. Montazeri were not included, especially the letter of 1/6/1368 [26 March 1989], which caused a stir, as well as the letter dated 1/26/1368 [15 April 1989]?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] The letter of 1/26 is included in the *Memoirs*, but the letter of 1/6 is not included. On the day the imam sent this letter to Mr. Montazeri, the late Haj Ahmad Aqa called me in the morning saying there was a letter for me that he would send by fax (this letter is the one dated 1/6). At the same time, a special report was to be sent from the Ministry of Intelligence to the Office of the Imam (peace be upon him). Haj Ahmad Aqa said: You must also send us an intelligence report, or put it on the fax. I said: This material is not ready now. I will send it to you in the evening. He also said he would fax the letter to me in the evening. Later he gave the letter to me in person. I read it, but the imam did not consider it to be in our best interest to publish it at that time. The late Haj Ahmad Aqa quoted the imam as saying: If it is published, the people will rush out and kill him, and other things will happen.

On the evening of that same day when a group of prominent people, including the exalted leader, the president of the republic Mr. Hashemi and also Ayatollah 'Ozam Meshkini and Ayatollah Amini, learned of the harsh content of the letter, they went to see the imam and asked him to delete the part of the letter about depriving Mr. Montazeri of justice. No matter how much the gentlemen insisted, the imam did not agree, but said even harsher things, which I do not consider it to be in our interest to discuss now.

In any case, the letter of 1/6 is indisputable. In addition to all of the people who read it at the Imam's home, prominent people such as the individuals mentioned visited the Imam and spoke with him about the letter's contents. The imam was not willing to reduce the contents of the letter a little; the letter dated 1/8 from Mr. Montazeri to the imam also confirms the letter of 1/6. Therefore, the existence of this letter and the imam's insistence on its contents are indisputable.

[Question] In view of the exalted leader's statement that a pilgrimage to Mecca without the rite to purge the polytheists is not a true pilgrimage, and the fact that it has been two years since that rite has been held during a pilgrimage to Mecca, has a serious decision been made on this matter, or not?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] With regard to the idea that a pilgrimage to Mecca without the rite to purge the polytheists is not a true pilgrimage, which the Imam said and the exalted leader also emphasizes, I must say that the rite to purge the polytheists, like all other pilgrimage obligations, is subject to having the ability to do it. If we do not have the ability to perform one of the principle rites of the pilgrimage to Mecca, as in the last three years when they were prohibited and the pilgrimage was suspended, the purging rite is still one of the pillars of the pilgrimage and its performance is subject to being able to do so.

When they came and surrounded the delegation, they did not permit a single person to go outside, nor did they permit a single person to come inside the surrounded group. They also blocked the streets for several kilometers. It was not possible to hold the rites to purge the polytheists. Of course verbal purging was possible, in the sense that we could verbally purge the enemies of Islam and shout death to America and death to Israel. Despite the conditions that were created, however, the purging rites were effectively held.

Surrounding the exalted leader's delegation with the implements and tools of war and creating military

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government in the city of Mecca and in the face of the pilgrims from the world's various countries carried our cries of purging to the entire world better than the official rites to purge the polytheists. This was just in the year 1372 [21 March 1993 - 20 March 1994]. In the five years when I was the exalted leader's representative on the pilgrimage, with the exception of the year 1372 every year the official rites to purge the polytheists were held, two years in the city of Mecca, one year in Mina and one year in 'Arafat. Based on the guidance from the imam and the exalted leader, we are determined to hold these rites in any way possible, and God willing we will do so.

[Question] With the disturbing lack of veiling and bad veiling which hurts the hearts of every combatant and every martyr's family, why isn't this confronted seriously? Is there a basic way to solve this problem?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] I have no responsibility in this area to be able to provide the necessary explanation, but in this regard I have a special basis, and I believe if it is realized, this problem and some others of this nature will be solved to a great extent. I cannot speak for the officials in charge of this matter. In my view, the correct course in this matter is not just a physical approach. This task needs a profound cultural program. There are reasonable ways to solve this problem in a reasonable amount of time. If we begin those programs now, in five more years we can obtain a definitive result. However, since I have no responsibility and it is possible that some of the officials or people who have responsibility in this area will have a different view, I will excuse myself from commenting.

[Question] What is your view concerning Dr. Sorush?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] The truth is, I have not read his books and it is not appropriate for me to say anything else.

[Question] Please give your view concerning the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez] and the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez]. Do you endorse both of them?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] In my view, absolute endorsement or absolute rejection is not right. Both factions are endorsed to the extent they follow the line of the vice regency, the leadership and the interest of the government.

In my view, the important point is that Islam wants Muslims to be trained in such a way that they are not wholly controlled by any group, band or faction. The Traditions state that the Prophet (peace be upon him) said: Be either a scholar or a student, but do not be an opportunist, or in other words, someone who has no views or independent opinions. Islam wants everyone to have an opinion, be independent and have specific criteria. They should endorse anyone who meets these criteria and not endorse anyone who fails to meet them.

If these two bodies present candidates, the people must think about which ones truly meet the needs of society and endorse those very ones. If these people make statements the people must think, and they must elect whoever is closer to that framework and those rules our Islamic system has.

Late in the blessed life of his holiness the imam, I went to him about the Militant Clergy Association and the Militant Clerics Society. I said it is not in our best interest for the clergy to break into two factions. In answer, the imam said: My belief is that these should be two different streams. Some people believe that the exalted leader wants the second faction to be eliminated, but in the last few years when I have discussed this issue with his holiness, he had denied it.

[Question] In your view, is it likely in the near or distant future that an all-inclusive Islamic party will appear, composed of the existing forces following the imam and the leadership?

[Mohammadi-Reyshahri] I do not consider this unlikely. I think an all-inclusive stream is a good thing. All ideas must be used in managing the country. If we want to be successful, we must use all the forces. In my view, organizational common ground, with all the preferences that exist in the framework of Islam, the revolution, the Islamic Republic, Islam, and the leadership, is useful.

Kazempur-Ardabili's Views on Political Parties

96LA0112A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 5 Dec 95 pp 1, 4

[Interview with Hoseyn Kazempur-Ardabili, advisor to the minister of foreign affairs and a member of the Arbitration Council of OPEC, by unidentified correspondent; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR NEWS NETWORK—**Since the early years of the revolution, I had very radical views regarding economic issues, the role of the government, and the so-called strict implementation of the Constitution, especially in regards to foreign policy, nationalization, and confiscation, and acted on many of these views, but in these few years, I have modified many of my views. If today someone asks me, do you agree with the monopoly of foreign trade by the government or not, I would say, no, whereas I myself offered the bill on the implementation of Article 44 of the**

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Constitution to the Majles. (Of course, since 1360 [21 March 1981-20 March 1982], it has not been put on the agenda of the Majles.)

[AKHBAR] What is the reason for this? Why were your views that way when you were in charge and later you changed them?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] On the whole, those who take charge of affairs start with a series of mottoes, rules, and programs that they want to implement, but in proceeding they face political, implemental, resource, and other limitations and cannot make what they want materialize. Then they go back to their own theories and begin to modify the theories, taking into consideration the existing realities. These problems show that their initial theories had not been formed on the basis of a coherent program and within a collective movement and were the result of a series of individual and personal opinions and experiences, and there is no place to correct these theories, including the parliament, the party, and public opinion. This causes the mistakes to be repeated over and over again.

[AKHBAR] In other words, do you believe in a parliament that is comprised of political parties, with public opinion and the press functioning as controlling factors?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] Yes, in fact the backgrounds for evaluation, criticism, and reform must be created in the society continuously and regularly. Political parties can do this in the sense that the opinions of the individuals are modified within the party and presented in the form of a prepared collection of opinions and ideas. This collection then is discussed in the parliament and evaluated, criticized, and acted upon by various expert opinions that exist in the parliament. This is the method that is practiced in may of the countries in the world and has had successful and positive gains and results and has caused growth in the society in various areas.

Unfortunately, such a mechanism has not existed in our country as it should have, and in the first stage we must take steps to create such a system and mechanism. In such a system, appropriate responsibility is given to individuals in charge based on their competence and implemental ability, and if certain individuals are unable to do the job, they give their place to capable individuals.

In such a situation, all the potential is used appropriately.

[AKHBAR] Do you mean the existence and presence of active parties can help create such a system and mechanism?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] Of course, the successful and effective activity of parties is conditional on the existence of intense cultural and political awareness in the society in order for the individuals to have the capability to accept opposing opinions. Reaching this goal and definition requires a single framework so that within that framework various opinions are expressed. We perhaps experienced a so-called very democratic phase that ended in political, social, and military anarchy in the course of the revolution. In other words, from 1357 [21 March 1978-20 March 1979] to mid 1359 [21 March 1980-20 March 1981]—that is, when the war started—we had this experience, more or less. During this period, we had all the ideological movements, including the left, the right, and the middle, with various ideologies, armed and unarmed in the country. The result of this experience was terrorism and anarchy, and the Islamic Republic paid a price for this situation. That is why in a so-called free intellectual democratic atmosphere, a framework must be devised for political and social activities in order for political groups and parties to create their roles and announce their views within that framework and gradually assume a role in the elections, in the Majles, and in the government. The opposition groups who are not in these arenas or fields should engage in evaluating them and reporting these evaluations in the public opinion through the mass media. This issue can solve problems for the country. Otherwise, we will always be under the influence of national emotions through stating the ideals, wishes, and goals of a group which supports a particular policy or method, which would not yield the desirable result. For this reason, we must try to create a systematic order in the country. Also, we have found by experience that those who advocate the establishment and activities of the parties and groups, when they are in power, do not want this. As a rule, when the opposition is outside the system, it demands the expansion of freedoms and social participation, but when it is inside the system and in charge of the affairs, within the framework of other factors and justifications depending on the historical and social necessities, even ideological views, it does not pursue parties and factions.

The formation of parties and groups and the systematization of their activities in the country requires a lengthy passage of time that may not be created in the course of the political and social maturity resulting from the relationship between individuals and alliances of political views. You might see two people together in one political movement, but when they come to the point of action and experience on the question of elections, they reach a gap. On the other hand, you might see two opposite factions that form a coalition and unite once they leave the system. This is due to the need of an ideolog-

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ical movement for information and coalition to acquire power, but when in power, they need to improve their will. How we can reach the point of power not causing separation once we are in power and not uniting and forming a coalition when we are not in power, but retaining our differences, is to go through a process of growth. In order to reach such a goal, we must acquire political and social maturity at the national level, which requires a vast cultural foundation and extensive work.

[AKHBAR] How do you evaluate the position of the people in this definition?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] The understanding, recognition, and awareness of the people of our country regarding political and social issues is very high compared to other Third World countries and some of the developed countries, but because the country has not had a historical experience of systematic political operation, this understanding, recognition, and awareness is not manifested in the form of systematic social behavior, and its behaviors are affected by the space, time, spirit, temporary needs, and governing climate. For example, during the war, these people reached national unity with their active presence on the scene and showed that the political and social maturity is high, but they have not had the experience of using this maturity and awareness on a historical course and on the basis of a definition of the needs and resources on a systematic selective course. The reason for this problem may have been the existence of numerous and continuous crises in the country that have not made this possible.

[AKHBAR] What is the role of the government in strengthening this scholarly behavior that stems from social maturity?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] Helping to prepare the grounds for the appearance and strengthening of social movement and growth are among the duties of the government. The present understanding of the government of the country outside its borders is that at the present time a political current governs the country and some of the political currents that earlier had a share in the political affairs of the country exist today as separate minorities outside the government, who speak about some of their demands from their own particular podiums. Of course, this is not true, or it is not severe, but this is what is understood.

The second role of the government must be to prevent the people from becoming disillusioned in participating in political and social decisions, because the people may after a while, from facing the actions of the groups that have been in the government and have not acted as they should, become disillusioned from participating in political and social decisions.

[AKHBAR] How can the officials prevent the people from becoming disillusioned?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] By exhibiting behavior that conforms to the mottoes they have used prior to taking charge. In this way, the people's trust will be gained regarding the officials. For example, if an individual prior to assuming a position has used the motto that the people must be told everything and after he takes the position hides something from the people, no matter how unimportant, he has taken the first wrong step towards losing the trust of the people in himself and has committed the first error. If a person commits the first error, he will also commit other errors, perhaps even easier than the first. Hence, the people will realize that he has not acted on his statements and mottoes, will abandon him, and will pursue their other options.

Of course, in my opinion, it is not only the government that has the duty to create a suitable climate for the political and social activities of the people. People's demands, more than any other factor, can force any government to provide the conditions for the vast political participation of the people in the country. Until this vast social demand is made by the people, no government that comes to power will feel a need to meet this demand, and for this reason, it will not feel obliged to create these conditions.

[AKHBAR] Some try to exclude other individuals and groups with various labels and accusations. What should be done to counter them?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] In the absence of a system or legal behavioral mechanism, one political faction may say that technocracy is condemned and drive various political groups out of the political scene with certain labels. This is natural. The issue of the fight for power has such mechanisms and tools in it. Various political groups must not leave the field immediately as soon as they face accusations and labels.

[AKHBAR] Given the present conditions that govern the world, how should we act and what should we do to achieve our goals?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] We must go back to a more actual, timely, tangible question. There is a time when we want our religious behavior to be what the world requires. There is also a time that we want to change the world, as our religion tells us. In other words, given the external limitations, we can either be prepared to modify our ideology, or we can use our ideology to break down the outside walls and change the conditions.

If you want to build the world on the basis of your religion, which is what we want, then you will have

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a long and difficult road with many obstacles and problems ahead of you.

You may say that we have an external premise, which is that power embodies the international system and the mechanisms that govern it, but we are also susceptible to the influences of the superpowers on our beliefs.

In this case, we must form a behavior that firstly guarantees our national interests and our security. Then, in the same existing situation that governs the world, you can have an effect within the limits of the existing resources to some extent and create change. Of course, this is one degree beneath what our school and ideology says, that is, to build the world on the basis of religion.

For this purpose, a system must be created. Movement in the existing climate requires a free course, because if there is no freedom, creativity becomes restricted in the society, which will result in the paralysis of the political and social system, whereas the existence of freedom results in the growth of creativity and even in the strengthening of the political and social system in practice that will make your goal materialize.

In such a climate, discussing contradictory ideas is necessary and beneficial. The more closed the climate, the more restricted the political elections, the more creativity is reduced. The decrease in creativity will result in our becoming less able.

[AKHBAR] On what factors does the success or lack of success of an ideology inside or outside the regime and its growth and development depend?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] If a national view is presented successfully at the national level, it will have the potential of becoming international. An unsuccessful idea at a limited geographical level cannot be exported. For the success of a viewpoint, a series of parameters of power are necessary. Among these parameters are political power, military power, and the capability of changing these powers to international power. The existence of a suitable combination of these factors of power in a country changes that country to a superpower that has the ability to achieve national and extra-nationalistic goals simultaneously, but a country that does not have an appropriate combination of the elements of power always has to choose between its national and extra-nationalistic goals, because if national ability, which is a collection of powers, does not increase, the power to achieve extra-nationalistic goals will not be achieved. Hence, it must continuously choose.

For example, the former Soviet Union set extra-nationalistic goals for itself with an ideology. With ideological, political, and military power, it tried to achieve these extra-nationalistic goals, but because it did not have economic power, it could not expand its political idea, even with the support of military power.

On the other hand, another country, Japan, which had economic power that in foreign policy even copied the United States and had a dependent military power, today is gaining a political role in the world, and they even want to give this country the right of veto in the United Nations.

On the other hand, they are telling Russia that it must destroy the nuclear warheads that it has so that they can give it the money it needs to continue its economic and social life. In other words, to carry out some of its economic reconstruction, Russia must give up its military power.

Japan and the former Soviet Union have both moved on a materialistic course, one a socialist kind and the other a capitalist kind, but both were on the course of accepting the existing international conditions.

Our situation is more complex than that of those two countries. We have the issues of protecting our national security, economic development, the claim of expanding our influence, and changing the international system.

Our priorities are clear. First, we must protect ourselves. Then we must have development and expansion. You cannot begin to expand without having had economic development. If you do so, your national security will be affected because you will have weaknesses. In other words, if you lean toward external concerns prior to economic development, your national security will be threatened. You must follow the case of independence, political stability, protection of internal security, then economic development and growth, and then follow expansion and export.

Some may interpret what was said differently and say that if you remain idealistic within yourself, you shall be so imprisoned, isolated, and under foreign pressure that the situation will reach the point of explosion.

Based on historical experiences that have also been implemented in various countries and have had positive results, we must move within the existing collective international system that has been defined by the existing powers. For this reason, when a country is regarded by these powers to be expansionist or the exporter of an ideology, it will be immediately placed under economic embargo to disrupt its development, so that in this way national instability, disorder, and chaos are created in that country, but the goal must not be forgotten. To achieve any ideal, first, we must start with the reality and then pursue its achievement on a realistic course.

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[AKHBAR] What must be done to counter such actions by the great powers?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] This question may be answered with one example. Look, supporting the Muslims in the world and not interfering in the internal affairs of others are two principles of the Constitution. The boundary of our foreign behavior is that the pursuit of one goal does not harm the other. If to support Muslims, you are obliged to interfere in the internal affairs of others, you must not do so. We are not supposed to violate other principles in order to pursue one principle because all the principles that govern foreign policy in the Constitution have equal value, and all the principles must be observed. If we want to violate other principles to implement one principle as we wish, we must pay a significant price for it. Even change in the understanding of the international community regarding our political behavior sometimes becomes necessary, and we must engage in improving our international reputation. Regarding the developmental goals of the country, the issues are the utopian vision of the society that we want to build. For example, we cannot have an oil and economic development policy separate from foreign policy in the region, because they are related. In other words, we cannot pursue a regional political policy separate from the oil policies and economic development. For instance, in a region in which some of the existing regimes feel that we wish to overthrow them, we cannot have oil cooperation with them. In OPEC, we do not have relations with Venezuela and Algeria; we have differences with the Emirates; we have fought Iraq; and we have problems with Saudi Arabia. These countries are the main members of OPEC. Now, if we want to coordinate with all of these countries to increase the price of oil and as a result have economic development, considering our relationship with them, we cannot achieve the results. We must improve this situation. I do not want to say that if you have no problems with these countries, your problems would be solved. The conditions are necessary but may not be enough. On the other hand, we have developmental goals that for certain reasons put pressure on us, such as population growth, the destruction of the economic infrastructure in the war, the people's expectations for growth and development, and reconstruction and social welfare.

In today's world, to create a new job by making use of competitive technology, about $30,000 must be invested. In other words, to create jobs for 5 million unemployed people, $150 million must be invested. At the same time, what governs the world today is capital, technology, and competition in price and the market. Our resources are limited. Hence, we are forced to borrow. Of course, in my opinion, this method, that is, borrowing to create jobs, development, increasing the volume of production, etc. is the right thing to do, of course, provided it does not harm the international credit of the country for accepting foreign financial resources, and, of course, in this case certain problems have been created for us.

In the next stage, we must absorb resources that generate more revenues. To do this, we must invest in oil resources and increase profits in this industry. This requires a great deal of investment. Hence, we must go after various methods of attracting capital, such as the method that the Ministry of Petroleum has used recently to implement its projects.

[AKHBAR] How do you evaluate the First Five-Year Economic, Social, and Cultural Plan?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] The First Plan has been successful to a great extent in the area of building an infrastructure that will result in the creation of a change in the increase of national production in the country, regardless of the tragedy created by the lack of planning in the repayment of debts that harmed the international financial credit of Iran.

Another point that needs to be made is that sometimes economic policies follow political strategies. At other times, political policies facilitate economic policies. In other words, choosing one of the two is difficult. When there is a threat against internal security politically and militarily, as during the war, at that time expenditures are used from the economy to protect the national security. You distribute coupons, establish restrictions, decrease imports, reduce government expenditures, and practice conservation, and you give a salary of 7,000 tumans to the minister and do whatever is necessary.

But the threat against internal security might not be political and military, or it may have decreased and changed to an economic threat, the effects of which are inflation, high prices, unemployment, decrease in production, and the like. Hence, foreign policy must come to the aid of achieving the economic goals. This can be done through modification of political behavior, for instance, to attract capital. It can be through positive and stabilizing diplomatic relations with countries that have technology and capital in order to encourage them to invest. It can be the settlement of debts and loans in a climate of friendship and understanding, and it can include all of these.

In a relationship such as that between the United States and Japan, the Americans at the time that Clinton came to power thought that the Japanese would always follow their foreign policy for their economic development, but

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the Americans, on the contrary, have accepted economic costs for their political views and tendencies. The result is that Japan has a significant trade surplus over the United States and has captured the world markets, and the Americans are at a loss as to what to do. As a result, political pressure is on them to achieve their economic goals.

We have sometimes drawn restrictions for ourselves that are not very much related to our principles and can be corrected with some modification and work, which can be seen in the first three or four years of the presidency of Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani. During this period, the policies that were publicized by the government consisted of: We are not trying to create enemies; we want stabilization; we were neutral in the developments regarding the occupation and liberation of Kuwait. For this reason, we were able to provide a great deal of capital and credit to built the country. Even when we were unable to repay the loans and credit we had received on time, we were able to ask for an extension. We were able to get long-term, low-interest loans from Japan, financially secure several projects of the World Bank in various places, and in short we moved on a course in which the foreign policy, foreign relations, and foreign behavior, on the whole, facilitated resources for economic development, but this policy somewhat changed as a result of external developments. The process of creating peace in the Middle East escalated, and we had a firm, inflexible position in that connection. These positions were announced. The rest of the affairs, whether it was the United States or England who wanted to put a distance between us and our international economic allies, both by the extreme behavior of some of our internal factions whose motives may have been domestic and political rather than in connection with national interests, caused us to gradually return to a situation of having the limited resources put under more embargoes, and the pressure to not have international relations with Iran, to prevent payment of funds by the World Bank to Iran, and for other countries not to give long-term loans to Iran, increased the economic pressures on Iran.

[AKHBAR] How do you evaluate the economic modification policies and the recent foreign currency policies?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] At one time, we saw that the price of the dollar was going up continuously and reached 600 tumans and 700 tumans. All the prices were in dollars, and people said that salaries were in rials and expenditures in dollars. We said that we wanted to eliminate the relationship between the dollar and domestic prices. We set a price of 300 tumans on the dollar, but the price of meat increased to 1,300 tumans. This showed that the relationship between the rial and the dollar could not be severed, because the existing relationship was not an inflationary relationship. When you set the price of the dollar at 300 tumans and raw materials for the production of factories are not imported, there will be no products in the market. Hence, the price of a domestically produced refrigerator goes up to 250,000 tumans and meat to 1,300 tumans per kilo.

The price of the dollar can be any amount on paper, but if you do not free it, then it will again go above 1,000 tumans.

The source of this change in policy regarding the rate of foreign currency was political and not economic. The rate of foreign currency cannot be set by circular letters. Rather, it is set by the mechanisms of the market and through increased production. When you have loosened the export and import regulations of the country so much that demand for foreign currency is within the ability of supply, the price of foreign currency remains stable. Hence, you allow imports to the extent that you control the price of the dollar within a definition of a consumption model, for which you are able to provide foreign currency.

But if you are unable to provide the needed foreign currency, raw materials will not be imported, the reserve raw materials of factories will finish in six months, and the price of domestically produced refrigerators will equal the price of foreign-made side by side refrigerator freezers. In that case, you will be forced to change your policy and, for that matter, as a result of domestic political pressure. The fact is that in practice, at the present time, it is not possible to sever the relationship of the dollar and the rial; the possibility of doing this has been practically eliminated.

[AKHBAR] How do you see the situation of the oil market, and how should economic policies be devised and implemented considering the declining trend of the price of oil in the world markets?

[Kazempur-Ardabili] Even though the price per barrel of crude oil today is $15.95 compared to December 1986, it has a purchasing power of $9.86. This is the result of the role that OPEC has played in the past two years. Even though the price of oil has increased, its purchasing power has regularly decreased.

Considering this decrease in the purchasing power of one barrel of oil, the developmental programs must be designed realistically. The war between poverty and wealth that had to happen in the world, in the course of history, has been changed by the great powers to tribal, nationalistic, religious, ethnic, and other wars and quarrels. Today, in order to maximize the capability of

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oil production, provided it is regarded as an economic project, with minimum use of national resources, that is, through borrowing, mutual purchases, and foreign investment, we must develop the exploration, production, and exploitation of our resources. At junctures when the price of oil is at the highest level, we must increase production and export. Imports must be allocated to providing for the needs of the large foreign currency consuming sectors, such as petrochemicals, steel, agricultural industries, and parent industries. Investments must be in infrastructures, such as roads, communication, emergency, and the like. After that, we enter the phase of development of exports. For this, too, the share of non-oil exports must increase, and the share of oil exports reduced to the extent that the role of oil in national revenues becomes insignificant.

In the area of development, we must secure our oil revenues for the future with the least amount of allocation of national resources. It is not desirable for us to have oil revenues and spend the revenues on the oil industry. What is desirable is for someone else to come and invest and excavate in this area and take his share of the profits.

The basis of our economic movement is a correct one. We went after replacing imports, decreasing dependence on oil revenues, and creating a variety of sources for non-oil exports by supporting these sectors, which we had to do. For the development of non-oil exports, we certainly need markets. Our natural market for the implementation of the policy of developing exports is the Persian Gulf region for agricultural and consumer goods and even engineering services, and in the ECO region as well, in the same way, we have the possibility to expand our markets. Our foreign policy must facilitate the creation of markets for our non-oil exports.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs is moving in this direction, and the expansion of regional economic cooperatives is one of the tools for the expansion of our non-oil exports. In any case, despite the international problems and tragedies and the limited domestic resources, the country is on a desirable constructive course. Of course, the people endure a great deal of economic pressure, but in order to come through the phase of backwardness and reach economic development, reconstruction, building the infrastructure, and efforts to increase national production are necessary. We have gone through the phase of the replacement of major import items to a great extent. We must have the phase of increased exports in the plan and prepare all its internal and external necessities.

Kazempur From 1331 to 1374 [1952-1996]

Hoseyn Kazempur was born in 1331 [21 March 1952-20 March 1953] in Tehran. He pursued his education up to a bachelors degree in business in Tehran and then went to the United States to continue his education. The result of this trip was a master's degree in business administration. He is married and has two daughters. From 1356 [21 March 1977-20 March 1978] to 1357 [21 March 1978-20 March 1979], he was the manager of international trade of Pars Industrial Company. In 1358 [21 March 1979-20 March 1980] and 1359 [21 March 1980-20 March 1981], he served as the chairman of the board of directors and the general manager of the Trade Services Expansion Company of the Ministry of Commerce. He was then the minister of commerce of the Cabinet of Martyr Raja'i, and in the Cabinet of Engineer Musavi, he was the deputy foreign minister for international and economic affairs. Afterward, for a few years, he served as deputy minister for international affairs in the Ministry of Petroleum. He has also been a member of the Iranian delegation of OPEC, advisor to the minister of foreign affairs, and the Iranian ambassador to Japan. At the present, he is the advisor to the minister of foreign affairs and a member of the Arbitration Council of OPEC.

AKHBAR Speaks to Zali on Upcoming Elections

96LA0104A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 9 Dec 95 pp 1, 2

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR NEWS NETWORK—Dr. 'Abbas'ali Zali, Majles deputy from Karaj, said: Because of the failure to explain their campaign slogans in the elections to the Third and Fourth Majles elections, some competent and skilled candidates did not receive enough votes to become deputies.

In an interview with AKHBAR'S parliamentary correspondent, Dr. Zali said: In the elections for the Third Majles, specific and clear definitions were not given for slogans such as "True Islam," "Americanized Islam" and nor were they provided in the elections for the Fourth Majles on the issue of vice-regency of the chief jurisconsult and commitment to it and belief in it, which in reality should have been made the main focus for action and slogans. He added: The lack of specific definitions for campaign slogans used in the elections for the aforementioned terms led to incorrect interpretations in the minds of voters with regard to the candidates.

He added: On the other hand, in the previous terms, apart from the factionalism, unfortunately due to the emergence of a special atmosphere, many judgments

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about the registered Majles candidates were not based on Islamic ethics.

He explained: Yet many of these individuals were and are endorsed by the late Imam and the exalted leader of the Islamic revolution.

He said: Recently a group called the "technocrats" has come to the fore. If their way of thinking and their outlook are not explained and defined comprehensively and completely, it is possible that minds and ideas in society will stumble and make mistakes with respect to this group.

He said: The technocrats believe that new techniques must be used to manage society. This is not erroneous, and moreover it is even considered a virtue, but it must be kept in mind that it is not enough just to have specializations and an orientation towards technology to manage the country.

He believes: The nation's management, especially the Majles deputy seats, must be in the hands of committed, specialist and skilled individuals with experience in the principles of nation-keeping.

Dr. Zali, chairman of the Islamic Consultative Majles Plan and Budget Commission, emphasized: Judging individuals must be done separately and independently of their group or factional affiliations; it must be done based on individual capability.

He believes: Sufficient opportunity must be provided for the people to evaluate candidates and choose the most competent deputy in a sound campaign atmosphere.

The Majles deputy from Karaj added: Deputies must go into the Fifth Majles who have adequate awareness of international and regional affairs, the nation's problems and domestic and foreign political affairs.

He added: The high officials and the officials conducting the elections must be more open-minded in order to permit participation in the elections for the Fifth Majles by various groups that believe in the system so the public can send the most competent deputies of their choosing to the Majles, based on their own discretion and evaluation.

He emphasized: In the present circumstances, the nation needs national cohesion and unity of speech, and if as many committed and specialist candidates as possible from a wider group of classes find their way into the Majles, this will benefit the government and society.

Dr. Zali added: In the elections for the Fifth Majles, the narrow-mindedness of previous Majles terms must be eliminated so that individuals with a good work record and commitment to the vice-regent can get into the Majles. Along with this, the preservation of the values of Islam and the revolution and belief in the vice-regency of the chief jurisconsult are also essential.

He said: In the Third Majles, there was so much hard-line activity in political affairs and in factional clashes that ethical considerations were ignored in some cases. On the other hand in the Fourth Majles, the deputies did not take that many political positions.

He explained: In reality, in both the Third Majles and the Fourth Majles there was a kind of extremism and extravagance, and this type of conflict with flexibility and open-mindedness must be put aside in the Fifth Majles.

With regard to the role of political parties in election activities, he said: Naturally, the active political parties in society bring their candidates into the elections with organized party goals and programs, and the people also vote for the candidates they prefer based on their understanding of party programs.

He added: In other words, the voters evaluate, judge and choose the election candidates in accordance with party political, economic, social and cultural goals.

He said: Since party members usually begin their party activities at the lowest levels, when they take on responsibility in legislative matters they do so as individuals whose characteristics have been studied, and thus the people can cast ballots for the candidates they prefer with greater peace of mind.

He explained: Active political parties in society provide a kind of observation and control for the ruling party in various areas. This in itself will prevent the commission of errors and reduce mistakes by the ruling party in various matters.

The deputy from Karaj in the Islamic Consultative Majles added: The existence of political parties and election competition based on them is a positive point in society, but at the present time, due to the lack of active parties in the country, voters for the Fifth Majles will have to evaluate and elect the candidates individually.

He believes: The position of a Majles deputy is that he will not be affiliated with any faction, because affiliation with a faction will separate the deputy from the people.

He added: If an opportunity is given so that individuals who rely on their own thinking and experience may take their own true places, this will be in the nation's interest.

Dr. Zali said: In the Fourth Majles there is a group called the "Independents" who make their decisions on various issues based on their own outlook and thinking without any dependence at all on the majority faction

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(Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez]) or the minority faction (Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez]). The more individuals there are like this in the Majles who have independent ways of thinking, the better it will be for society.

With regard to the forthcoming Majles term, he predicted: The Fifth Majles will certainly be more varied than previous terms because of the entry of aware individuals who are especially committed to the Majles.

Musavi-Lari Views Elections, Factional Participation

96LA0102A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 10 Dec 95 pp 1, 3, 4

[Interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdolvahed Musavi-Lari, member of the Militant Clerics Society, by "two editors of AKHBAR newspaper"; place and date not given]

[FBIS Translated Text] What **Is the Decision of the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyyun-e Mobarez] in the Elections?**

Musavi-Lari: Until This Moment, Nothing

The political, economic, and social conditions of the country, the next Majles elections, the procedures for supervising the elections, the composition of the supervisory committees, the existing background and climate in the country prior to the Fifth Majles elections, parties, and the need of the society for the presence and activities of parties, etc., were issues discussed in an interview with Hojjat ol-Eslam 'Abdolvahed Musavi-Lari by two editors of AKHBAR newspaper.

He was born in 1333 [21 March 1954-20 March 1955], is married, and has five children. His seminary education consists of seminars in religious jurisprudence and principles.

Mr. Musavi-Lari served in the First and Third Majles as the deputy from Tehran. After that he was the parliamentary legal deputy minister of Islamic culture and guidance, and at the present he is an advisor to the National Library.

Mr. Musavi-Lari is also a member of the Militant Clerics Society.

[AKHBAR] We are discussing the issue of participation in the elections and the numerous discussions involved in this connection. One of them is that the Militant Clerics Society has a different view regarding participation in these elections. Could you explain in this regard?

[Musavi-Lari] In my opinion, the elections should not be looked at merely in terms of electing a deputy or establishing an assembly called the Majles for the exchange of opinions by the deputies of the people. Elections are all of these, but moreover, they are of importance to all members of the society. The Majles elections are a very important issue that must not be neglected. Given all this, the Majles and its composition as well as the deputies' presence in the Majles and the way people come to the election scene and elect deputies are important. Most important is the course and the atmosphere that the custodians of the society provide for these issues. How the custodians of the society look at the elections and the role of the people, their presence, and ultimately their participation in decisions is a very important issue, and the elections may be noteworthy from this perspective. In other words, in addition to the fact that the sensitivity of participation of the people in their destiny is an important issue, attention by the custodians of the society is the role of the people, and their presence in various scenes is also important.

Hence, I believe that the press should look at the issue of the elections not merely in the sense of an arena for the confrontation of two or three viewpoints or the presence of two or three ideological factions and spectra in one of the social arenas, but also pay attention to all its side issues, some of which may be even more important than the main issue.

[AKHBAR] You have a set of factors in mind for these elections which can be deduced from your statements. How do you evaluate this set of factors for the Fifth Majles elections from the perspective of the Militant Clerics Society?

[Musavi-Lari] I did not mention the factors that are effective in the elections in order. The most important issue is that the election is an arena for the participation of the people in their destiny. Hence, here the people have the primary role. The results of the elections, too, must reflect the presence of the people. All the preparations must be made in such a way as to show the role of the people in the scene of elections. Any action by anyone that would harm the presence of the people in the elections or would make the people despair or be unhappy with regard to the future and the outcome of the elections, in my opinion, is a problem for the whole society, or a contradiction between words and deeds in approaching the role of the people that has existed in the mind of some people. We believe that the people should be motivated to participate. The field must be provided in such a way that all individuals who believe in the national covenant—that is, the Constitution—are able to be involved in the elections. All the restrictive factors that might discourage the people from participation or

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cause the candidates to feel that they can no longer be present must be prevented. The arena of the elections is the arena of testing, both for the people, as to how to act intelligently, and for those who are in charge of the administration of the country (or in a sense are the custodians of the affairs), as to what extent they believe in this right of the people to effect their own destiny. Of course, the permission for the participation of the people in their own destiny has been granted to us first by the ideological school, which is Islam, and also the Constitution, which is our national covenant. Finally, the general policy of the regime of the Islamic Republic and the views of the founder of this revolution, who has told the people in the course of this period that they must be present on the scene, makes this presence certain.

As a member of the Militant Clerics Society, as far as I know, the factor from the perspective of the society is nothing but providing the arena for the presence of the people and for the people to be able to participate in their own destiny. If the Council of Guardians, the executive organization, the media, and all those who effect how this scene is created join hands to ensure the participation of the people in a desirable manner as clarified in the Constitution, intended by the founder of the revolution, and emphasized in our Islamic religion, certainly, the Militant Clerics Society will welcome it, as will every member of the society. If we have shortcomings in some areas and engage in actions that harm this basic principle, undoubtedly, it will not be pleasing to the society.

[AKHBAR] We have no more than three months until the elections. How do you evaluate the factors that exist at the present time and the conditions? Assuming that the conditions remain the same until the day of the elections, will the Society offer a list or not?

[Musavi-Lari] In the Fourth Majles elections, one of the issues that came up was the issue of omission or negation of the competence of some of the figures in regards to their participation in the election scene. The representatives of the Council of Guardians, the executive organizations, and the Voice and Vision acted in such a way that, in fact, a particular spectrum was able to go to the Majles. For the Fifth Majles elections, we see some changes in this regard, but the changes are such that if in the Fourth Majles elections, despite the fact that the competence of about 80 people was rejected, of whom about 40 had been deputies in the Third Majles, the Council of Guardians did not have the law of approbatory supervision at its disposal; in fact, it acted on its own understanding and interpretation of the Constitution. Ultimately, too, it faced the opposition of many at that time. The charge that occurred is that in the Fourth Majles the law was ratified in a way that it gave the Council of Guardians the right of approbatory supervision. In other words, what occurred at the time, even if it was through the interpretation by the Council of Guardians itself, is now also legal in the sense that, in addition to the interpretation of the Council of Guardians, the Majles has also given this right to the Council of Guardians. What approbatory supervision means is that in all the issues related to elections, the Council of Guardians acts in place of those who hold the elections. In this sense, it does not supervise, it engages in implementation.

It must determine the competence of the implemental committees ahead of time, even those in charge of the ballot boxes, and the details of the issues that the Ministry of Interior want to implement must be carried out after the approval of the Council of Guardians. While the meaning of supervision is that the person holding the elections should do so and a group called the Council of Guardians should watches that the elections are held as the Constitution has intended.

If they see a violation, they should deal with it within the framework of the law. It is now exactly the opposite of this. In other words, the implementors of the law must ask for the opinions of the supervisory committee prior to and after the elections and carry out their duty. In this term, contrary to the previous years, the Council of Guardians began its planning about a year earlier. The most important actions are the following: the dismissals and appointments that have been made so far at various levels of the Ministry of Interior and the executive organizations that hold the elections and the presence of some of the very serious elements of the factions called the right in the Council of Guardians, who also had a role in the past in dealing with the opponents; also, the publicity that in the course of these three or four years has been carried out unilaterally, even unofficially, by particular individuals; and the resources and podiums, such as the mosques, the press, and Friday prayer podiums, that are at the disposal of a particular faction.

In short, what existed in the Fourth Majles elections exists more strongly in the preparations of the Fifth Majles elections.

[AKHBAR] Despite all of the factors that you mentioned, I have not yet received the answer to my question. Will the Society offer a list or not?

[Musavi-Lari] After the Fourth Majles elections, with the ratification of the political committee, the Militant Clerics Society reached the decision to stop its political activities at the present time. Hence, the issue of elections is one of the arenas that fit this general rule. Since up to this moment, the Militant Clerics Society

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considers the conditions of the Fifth Majles elections in comparison to the Fourth Majles to have even been escalated, it is continuing with this decision. Up to this moment, it has no plan to offer a list of candidates for the Majles in Tehran and provincial cities.

Of course, this issue is of interest to the Society at this juncture, to pursue the matter in various ways so that the suitable climate for the presence of individuals who are ready to take part in the elections is provided. Not giving a candidates list in Tehran and the provincial cities (in the past, too, we only gave a list for Tehran) means that it does not see the existing conditions as appropriate to offer a list.

Despite the fact that the Society does not offer a list itself, if qualified individuals become candidates in Tehran and provincial cities, certainly it will vote for them, as will everyone else.

In my opinion, up to this movement, no signs have been observed that the climate is changing.

[AKHBAR] If a political group does not give a list in the elections, does it not mean that it will not participate in the elections?

[Musavi-Lari] That is not our understanding because participation in the elections has two dimensions. One dimension is for individuals to announce that they are volunteering to participate in the next Majles. Another dimension is that they consider the elections illegitimate and unsound. That is not so. What is customary in the world, too, is that when political groups oppose the elections and condemn them, they consider the essence of the elections improper and unsound, rather than saying that they will not participate.

Individuals and groups participating or not participating in an arena is partly due to the general climate of the society and their own particular conditions. In issues that concern political assemblies and organizations, the conformity of the particular conditions of the society and the particular conditions of that organization tell them whether or not they can have a presence in an arena. Of all that occurred in the Fourth Majles elections, the Society understood that, considering the necessity of preserving honor and since the dignity and character of all those who have set their hearts on the revolution must be protected, in order for some movement to occur, it would not harm anyone for any reason.

Hence, the Society does not see the existing conditions in conformity with its own particular conditions and prefers to confer its presence to those who are ready and see the conditions as suitable. The members of the Society, because of their loyalty to the revolution, the path of the imam, the last will and testament of the imam, and the goals and ideals of the revolution, like every member of the Society, will not leave the arena of the elections. In other words, they too will go to the ballot boxes.

[AKHBAR] When a political group goes to the ballot box, while it has not presented candidates itself and does not accept the opposite group, do you think it can do anything other than place blank votes in the box?

[Musavi-Lari] Fortunately, in Iran, especially in Tehran, the condition exists that we can say there are no more than two movements, either this or that...

[AKHBAR] You use the term "fortunately," but some say unfortunately, there are only these two groups.

[Musavi-Lari] In the past elections, there were independent candidates. You might say that those who entered the arena as independents were not qualified to go to the Majles, but we say that anyone who has those minimum requirements to participate in the election scene can come and present himself. I too, as an Iranian Muslim, have the right to vote for him or not vote for him. In Tehran, there may be 30 candidates or more, including those who are on a particular list, or independent individuals. Between those two groups, people may find some to be qualified and vote for them. No one has said that you must write the name of all 30 people when you receive the ballots.

[AKHBAR] And is it possible that you would not write anyone's name?

[Musavi-Lari] Usually among 100 to 150 or 200 people, there are after all individuals in whom you see some redeeming qualities and you vote for them.

[AKHBAR] Will you announce at the time of voting for whom you will vote?

[Musavi-Lari] If we announce for whom we vote, it will become clear that they are our candidates and are endorsed by us. We take part in the elections, as do students, employees, teachers, university professors, farmers, and ordinary people, who participate in the elections and do not announce beforehand for whom they want to vote.

[AKHBAR] They are not a political group, but you are a political group...

[Musavi-Lari] In any case, in the elections, the Militant Clerics Society will not present a list, but the members will not sit at home on election day or for the Society in a communique to ask the friends and supporters or those who supported it in the past and are now in that organization not to go to the ballot boxes or not to vote

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for someone or say that those who are candidates today are not endorsed by us.

The members of the Society will obtain the ballots at the level of students, for example, and vote, and at the same level, too, as a political action, participate in the elections. In any case, if the conditions become suitable, it will come forward, but now, it does not see any sign that the conditions will be different.

[AKHBAR] In fact, is offering a list by the Society not somewhat a protest of the lack of a suitable political atmosphere for the elections?

[Musavi-Lari] Certainly, such an idea can be deduced.

We cannot say this, and the Society will certainly not accept this from us. As a guild political organization, with all its history and the endorsement by the imam, the Society cannot say such a thing. It can be said that the Society is the only organization in whose formation the imam played the primary role. When this organization does not offer a list, it means that it does not consider its own conditions suitable and objects to the existing conditions. The Society says that with this approbatory supervision that you ratified, with the past history that we know about you, you do not want to forget the past but rather prepare yourself for the future.

[AKHBAR] Hence, you are saying that you do not consider the conditions of the elections suitable for participation, but you will participate in them. How do you explain this condition, considering the general interests of the regime and the people?

[Musavi-Lari] We neither consider ourselves the guardians of the people nor claim that we know better than others. On the other hand, as a group which has been present to varying degrees in the formation and the victory of the revolution and the administration after the revolution, we have a series of ideas and opinions that we believe are in the interests of the regime and the people and in conformity with the Constitution and the goals of the revolution.

In the area of dealing with the people, public opinion, and attention to the participation of the public in its own destiny, we have things to say that we have said and will say. When we feel that what we believe in is not implemented, what are we to do? We must either be completely indifferent and say it is none of our business, which is not in keeping with the intellectual and political formation of our Society—indifference cannot be found in the ideological and social dictionary and the political history of any of our friends—or, to achieve our ideas, opinions, and ideals, engage in critical action beyond the framework of action from within the regime. The members of the Society do not even think about such an issue. The third way is, despite the objection to some of the issues, to try through internal approaches, approaches that stem from a movement from within the regime, to take action in regard to some of the problems about which they feel strongly. We feel that what occurred in the Fourth Majles elections and what is being prepared for the Fifth Majles elections is to a great extent incompatible with the issue of general participation.

To have reactions outside the framework of internal issues would not be justifiable and tolerable for us. What is left is to object to what has occurred. In other words, out of goodwill regarding the future, we make reminders through words, the pen, and speeches. If some people sense from our not offering candidates and a list that we are afraid in regards to all that has happened that the people's will would weaken and this causes those in charge to correct their actions, this would be desirable to us.

Hence, not only is it not contradictory, but it is the only avenue that we can pursue. If we say that we are in the elections and using all the leverages at our disposal, as do others, and certain tensions and ultimately problems are created, it is not clear how it would benefit the society, but if I am not in the Majles and in my place someone else goes to the Majles who has the minimum requirements that people expect, even though from my perspective the friends that I vote for are better, because we have decided to move within the whole system, this is the only way that exists.

[AKHBAR] This action would not change all the conditions, correct?

[Musavi-Lari] I said that if we believed that the conditions were such that the individuals that we embrace were surely able to move within the framework of our beliefs, and we considered them good or better, and could find a legal opportunity for participation, naturally, we would not have hesitated with regard to their participation. The issue is that the conditions have been created in such a way as to ensure that a particular group goes to the Majles. Whether or not we introduce candidates would not change the matter very much. Hence, there are two ways. We can either introduce certain individuals to be set aside through elimination, disqualification, or the use of government resources and various podiums, or, if we do not present individuals, considering these conditions, we can let those who are ready and are presented by others participate, and the people also will realize that the conditions are not suitable for one group. Hence, we do not face the proposition that if we present certain candidates, they would certainly be elected to the Majles, and at the same time, we are not

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trying to present them. Our primary premise is that the conditions are not favorable.

In other words, the conditions are not right for us to say, why do we not present the better individuals? The better individuals will not be allowed into the Majles by those who are in charge: the executive committees with approbatory supervision and the like. If more favorable conditions are created, certainly we would not hesitate to present people.

[AKHBAR] Practically speaking, there is no time left for the conditions to change. At the present time, if we accept your premise and act accordingly, what guarantees exist that the grounds for the participation and entry of individual candidates would exist, as it does not exist for your presence in the Majles?

[Musavi-Lari] We are not the ones who should answer this. The answer must be given by others as to what guarantees they can give for the people to feel that their candidates can receive votes.

From my personal perspective, however, I believe that the situation is not as difficult regarding individual candidates as it is for factional candidates. Regarding the participation of independent candidates in the elections, there are no obstacles. If they receive votes, because they have no organizational support, they would not create a problem for the opposite faction. We cannot say decisively that if the opposite faction uses all the leverages to eliminate one faction, it would do so in regards to the independent individuals.

[AKHBAR] As a political organization, do you not think that to not participate in the elections will have negative consequences for the Society?

[Musavi-Lari] The Society's not participating in these elections is the result of the past experiences and the threat that we feel regarding the future. Not participating may indeed have negative consequences for the Society. We must ask, who is responsible for it? In other words, if I feel that the conditions are not provided for me to participate in the elections and do not make myself a candidate for the Majles, I am guilty, but the person who could have provided the opportunity for people like me to participate in the elections but did not, is he not guilty?

Second, suppose it will have negative effects. Others must be accountable as to why they act as they do. The Council of Guardians disqualified a number of the candidates of the Society. In other words, it set aside those who in the provincial cities were inclined toward the Society, 40 of whom were previously Majles deputies. No explanations were given as to why the Voice and Vision in the few days remaining before voting in Tehran would create a scene and attack the faction that was the imam's line and followed the imam's line and why it used every leverage to isolate them. They had mobilized the mosques and the imam's of the mosques not to allow even the list of the candidates of the Society to be available to the people. A deputy friend said: On voting day, I was at Mehrabad Airport. I went to vote. I asked for the list of candidates. They gave me the list of candidates of the Militant Clergy Association [Jame'eh-ye Rowhaniyyat]. They said: These are the candidates for whom you can vote. I raised my voice saying that I wanted the complete list of candidates. They said: Pardon us, we made a mistake.

When such poison is spread against one group, the radio and television engage in a propaganda bombardment, they speak against them in the mosques up to the level of excommunication, accusations against them are broadcast throughout the society, and a number of their forces are driven out of the scene, it is natural that only a percentage of people participated. Only those voted who had an incentive to vote for a particular faction. Today, too, we do not feel that the situation has changed.

[AKHBAR] Do you mean that your candidates lost due to the conditions and not the people? In other words, people wanted to vote for your candidates, but they did not allow it?

[Musavi-Lari] What I say is that they did not allow it in the sense that they made threats, and elements, such as the Voice and Vision, the congregational prayer imams, the mosques, those who held the elections, and the supporters of a particular faction, did not allow it.

We accepted the results of the elections. We say, those who participated at the stage gave more votes to the opposite faction. The question is, what percentage of the people participated? Why did a large number of people not participate? Our friends say, if the same leverages are going to be used to omit, eject, and negate one group, why should we bother?

The past conditions must be corrected. The president, in his current speeches, sometimes discusses issues that are hopeful, but such views should be proven in practice and implementation.

What is expected is that he should directly intervene regarding the ratification of the approbatory supervision law, against the dismissals and appointments of the executive directors and the appointments of the supervisory committees, and coordinate with the director of supervision. Speeches are not enough.

[AKHBAR] You consider yourself a part of the regime, which has a difference opinion with the other faction

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that has the majority in the Majles. You also said that the Society moves on the line of the imam. Do you mean that the opposite faction does not? In fact, what is your definition of the line of the imam, to which you consider the Society to be the heir?

[Musavi-Lari] As a matter of fact, we avoid saying that the imam's line is exclusive to one particular group. We do not say that we are the only followers of the imam's line and the others are not. We believe that we move on the imam's line and have certain criteria for this claim. Regarding the elections, the imam always said, all those who believe in the regime and accept the Constitution as the national covenant must participate. No individual should be omitted because of his particular viewpoint or preference. We believe that everyone who claims to support the Imam and follows the line, ideas, and the path of the imam must follow this course. When we see that a number of people are omitted from the scene, we feel that this policy is not the one favored by the imam as the founder of the regime. We claim that we go back to these conditions so that everyone who feels that, while he is moving within the framework of the regime and believes in the Constitution, he has the right to be present in all aspects of the society and benefit from all the resources in the interest of all. We believe that monopolizing the line of the imam in one particular faction is detrimental to the regime and the revolution. We say that, for these reasons, we support the line of the imam and believe that if our other friends and brothers claim to follow the imam, they must observe these principles.

[AKHBAR] At the present, in the political scene of the country, there is talk about the presence of two factions, left and right, which certainly is different from the political meaning of these two factions in the West, as with the term, parliament, which is a Western phenomenon. When was this line drawn?

[Musavi-Lari] You say that parliament is a Western phenomenon. I say that if the parliament is in the sense of consultation and the participation of every member of the society in his destiny, it has a Koranic root. You might say that its form is different and that the form is Western. We are not talking about form. We make use of all the tools and resources that are the results of human thought. We can use the forms that support the participation of the people in their own destiny, but we must fill these forms with something the content of which is compatible with our ideas and ideals.

The issue of left and right may go back to the problem that we have had in expressing political terms. Usually, in what is politically common in the world, the left is used to mean those who oppose the global capitalism system (Socialists or Marxists), but the use of the terms left and right are meaningless in our culture. These two ideas were created early in the revolution: the idea which seemed to lean toward capitalism and giving room to individual wishes and demands, that is, the idea that when there was a discussion of the labor law and added value, the speaker would be accused of having Marxist and atheist thoughts.

In this thinking, everything is in the service of the individual. In other words, it summed up Islam in terms of providing the needs of the individual without attention to the interests of the society. For example, they would consider taxes meaningless and illegal, and, similarly, the labor law, which would give certain rights to the workers vis-a-vis the employers, and the excuse was they were acting in accordance with the religious dissertations.

The other thinking was inspired by the teachings of the Imam. This idea would say individualism is fine, but the individual and the society must complement each other, and the society cannot be put in the service of the individual. You cannot sacrifice all the interests of the group for an individual. We must act in a way that the individual in the society benefits from the resources, as far as it does not harm the interests of the collective. The red flag of individual interests has to do with the interest of the collective. Religious guardianship was raised as an issue by this group. It was they who said the Islamic government has the authority to devise laws for the employer and worker and oversee the relations between the worker and employer and not allow a conflict between the worker and employer, or that people must pay taxes, and many of the issues that relate to the aspects of the society. They believed that all human beings must participate in their own destiny.

I believe that rather than talking about the left and the right, we must look at the two factions, one of which in all aspects places emphasis on the individual and the other accepts the individual and individualism to the point that they do not harm the interests of the society.

[AKHBAR] In your opinion, is individualism protected in Islam?

[Musavi-Lari] This is precisely Islam, individualism in the sense that the individual enjoys all the civil rights, unless they are in conflict with the interests of the society. Hence, terms such as corrupt, belligerent, and the like are used when something is regarded as being in conflict with the interests of the group. Here, restricting the individual is not only not contrary to Islam, but is exactly in accordance with Islam. Whatever is said contrary to this marks a very limited and short-sighted understanding of Islam.

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[AKHBAR] Did these two lines of thought also exist inside the [Islamic] Republican Party?

[Musavi-Lari] They also existed in the [Islamic] Republican Party, and they existed in various places. Especially, as time went by, these differences became clearer, and as we faced the more tangible issues in the society, the viewpoints became more clear and the individuals became more serious regarding their positions and discussed their ideas more clearly.

[AKHBAR] Which one of these two kinds of thinking grew more after the victory of the revolution and found a more desirable place in the government?

[Musavi-Lari] The people should judge this issue. The economic phenomena at that time or the cultural issues of that time should be compared with those of today. The same issue concerning the press that is discussed today also existed when our faction was in charge, but today, it is in a different form.

[AKHBAR] Regarding the press, in your opinion, how do you compare the situation now and then?

[Musavi-Lari] The officials of the Ministry of Islamic Culture and Guidance, for instance, say that the policy of trusting the publisher was a mistake. In other words, in their opinion, the writers, publishers, and book distributors must not be trusted.

The same problem also exists in the press. The responsibility for the press in the executive branch of the government is at the disposal of certain factions who propose restricting the press and censorship. This is also true of some of the publications. I do not support a cultural open-door policy, but for the thinkers and writers to come and claim restrictions is a new phenomenon. It is not only in the press. For example, what occurred in the course of the modification policy, from the beginning, we had an argument with regard to the issue of the modification policy, how it was implemented, the time of its implementation, and many other things. We saw that a number of people, however, made such a utopia out of the modification policy, as if the country has been waiting for such a day and Iran will become a flower garden. Now, the same group in the Majles and elsewhere defends the contraction policies, as though they were the founders of such an idea from the beginning. In my opinion, these contradictory maneuvers are the result of the lack of coherent thinking. Second, it is due to the absence of an organization according to which the people can evaluate that idea or an idea by which the people can evaluate the organization. If these ideas and initiatives are offered to the society by particular organizations and parties, collective ideas crystallize in one place, and these ideas reach the public more clearly. Otherwise, people will be harmed, because the people must endure the effects of these experiments. People are not laboratory mice, so that one day you say that the modification policy will save the country, and the next day you offer a policy of control at the level of a passenger not being able to even carry a radio on an airplane, otherwise, it will be considered smuggling. Usually, new proposals are set forth during the elections. A candidate who wants to get votes and become a Majles deputy will defend a particular policy that he sees the wave of the day wants or public opinion supports. Then, the next day, he faces problems and says the opposite. This spirit of individualism is perhaps one reason that parties are not formed, and another part of it is due to the fact that the criteria for establishing parties are not specified.

[AKHBAR] What do you mean by the criteria for establishing parties?

[Musavi-Lari] When a party is created, it has common goals that attract a group of people. A coherent idea regarding culture, economy, security, foreign policy, social liberties, and other issues must exist.

[AKHBAR] The Militant Clerics Society also has these characteristics that you mentioned. Why does it not become a party?

[Musavi-Lari] We are not talking about a particular guild group. For example, the [Islamic] Republican Party that you referred to earlier had a platform and was approved. Why was it closed down? The problem was that the party had a platform that was not in conformity with the behavior of its members.

A person who joins a party to gain power would have nothing to do with the platform and goals of the party. For example, in the bazaar, he would go his own way, but in the party he acted as a political support to meet the economic needs. As a result, after a while, there was a conflict with the idealism of the young forces in the party, and the party was closed down. Hence, the absence of a coherent idea is the main cause of parties not being formed. The second problem is the person who wants to allow parties to become active, but he lacks a clear idea. Those who request the organization will face problems, because he does not know whether parties in Islam are a praised or rejected phenomenon.

[AKHBAR] In your opinion, do such considerations prevent the creation of parties? Ultimately, what are the limits of the freedom of parties?

[Musavi-Lari] All those who in this society accept the Constitution, in all its details, can be present in all political, social, cultural, and economic arenas, but when a person does not accept the Constitution, there remains

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no covenant between him and the society, and he cannot be given room for activity.

As soon as a person enters this covenant, he must have immunity. In other words, he must be able to establish a party. He must be able to have a journal. He must be able to participate in social activities.

[AKHBAR] When your friends were in power, how did they approach the issue of parties?

[Musavi-Lari] In my opinion, all the movements that exist regarding the issue of parties and councils have their roots in that time. In other words, if the law on political parties was ratified or if Article 10 of the law on political parties was formed, if the societies and organizations found an arena to get permits, it is all from that time. At this time, there has been nothing except giving room to a few guild assemblies to counter a few other guild assemblies, which has itself added to the problems. For example, the House of Workers existed, but because it did not secure the interests of the gentlemen, they created an Islamic Society alongside it. Or the Islamic Association of University Students existed, and they created an Islamic Society before it. In fact, there is no interest in parties and organizations. This is all to eliminate the activities of the gatherings and organizations. They created organizations in front of others to overshadow those organizations.

[AKHBAR] What is your view regarding the formation of the Society?

[Musavi-Lari] This goes back to the conditions that were created. Some of the members of the Militant Clerics Society who said that, in their opinion, what they sought was not provided in the Militant Clergy Association, and so they separated from it and joined this Society. Later, despite the fact that the imam was very sensitive to the division of the clerics, and the unity of the society was the most pivotal motto of the imam and he pursued the unity of the clerics more seriously, he endorsed this organization. For some people, the question was raised: Despite all that emphasis on unity, how did the imam consent to the creation of an organization within the clerics and support it himself and give money and resources to create it?

[AKHBAR] What is your understanding?

[Musavi-Lari] My understanding is that the imam felt that there are two kinds of thought in the society, and these two kinds of thought also exist among the clerics, as among other strata. It is not logical to say to one group of clerics who have ideas contrary to the Militant Clergy Association that, despite the fact that you are contrary to those whose ideas you do not accept, engage in political activity with those with whom you disagree. The imam wanted this to give us a new path and make the society understand that within the system a correct and sound action can be carried out. If there are differences in taste in the society, there is no reason for us to suppress one in the interest of the other. When both believe in the principles and both work within the society, both must be given room. In my opinion, the important lesson that the imam wanted to give was to end the single party system.

Nevertheless, we believe that it is better for contrived groups to also exit. In other words, since in the universities there are Islamic Associations and the Office of Strengthening the Islamic Society, there will be exchanges of ideas, and in my opinion, it is, on the whole, in the interest of the society, even if the motivation of their founders was something else.

[AKHBAR] How do you evaluate the role of the press at this time?

[Musavi-Lari] The press has a pivotal role. It is fair to say that some of the custodians of the press support censorship. These custodians support disruption in the implementation of the law.

When the custodians of the press support the limitation of the press and restraining the pen, one cannot expect a great deal from the press. The mission of the press has been specified, both in the press law and the Constitution. Every sound mind simply understands what the work of the press is. I hope that the custodians of the press find their true place in the society, that is, they should neither be staunch defenders of the executive organization nor its staunch enemy.

They should neither support uncontrolled freedom that is outside the Constitution and the accepted religious principles nor engage in attacks, insults, accusations, and labeling if a person has a intellectual viewpoint, even if they do not agree with it. Indeed, we are sometimes embarrassed when we read some articles in some newspapers, but for insults and accusations, they have nothing to say. Instead of continuously talking about the mission of the press, we should speak about how we must deal with the problems that eat at our press like a canker and make our press ineffectual.

[AKHBAR] At the threshold of the Fifth Majles elections, some groups or independent individuals talk about a group as technocrats. What is your evaluation of the technocrats? Can the technocrats be considered a threat?

[Musavi-Lari] I was one those who thought a great deal about the examples of this issue. If what is meant by technocrats are the educated and Muslim people who are now active in the executive organization, who have combined specialization and commitment and are now

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serving the country, it is not negative. If what is meant is other people who have no belief in the foundations of the value of the revolution, and specialized work is the criteria for them, we must ask, who are they? Are they outside the present government or do they also exist in the government? If they are outside the government, they will not be able to have presence in the arena of competition. Even with regard to those who are inside and have certain resources, considering that the vast resources are at the disposal of the factions, it is not clear if they will get any results. Outside the government, if the fear is that the technocrats will enter the elections and take the elections, this is not so at all. Sometimes, in an intangible and unofficial way, the friends who are gathered around Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani and work with his Cabinet are presented as technocratic in their thinking. I think they are the ones who are everywhere and are present now and are serving. Many of them are among the recognized figures who are accepted by the people. At one time, the central motto of the right faction was that opposition to these people is enmity with the Prophet. I personally neither agreed to the motto then nor now. I consider this type of action to be a danger to the revolution. Even though in terms of taste and opinion, I have a different perspective, I consider it unfair to blame a faction which was their ally in the Fourth Majles elections for all the failures and with the motto of, save us from the technocrats, to try to diminish the responsibility of this first group for the problems in the past four years.

The right faction, due to the problems that it has, is creating a movement and feels danger from the technocrats. At the present time, when the elections are at issue and they do not have a new motto, they state a new motto, which is an old one. One of these mottoes is resorting to what is held sacred and presenting themselves as the custodians of the religious sacred beliefs of the people and others as opponents. Alongside this effort, they raised the issue termed the threat of the technocrats. At one time, they raised the issue of the threat of the radicals, and now they say technocrats. They think that people are not very well-informed or are not happy with these foreign terms. They present a group as technocrats. Hence, I think that the raising of the issue of technocrats is a propaganda tool. Those who follow this motto are individuals who do not understand the meaning of technocrat at all. If you ask them, who do you mean is a technocrat, they cannot answer. In other words, they mean the people who are now in charge of the Central Bank, the Ministry of Economic Affairs, the Tehran City Hall, or elsewhere. If you mean these people, they have always been and are in the revolution. As for their views being contrary to the revolution, in my opinion, what is now discussed is in fact the opposition to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani and the friends of Mr. Hashemi as the technocrats, and such statements are meaningless.

Because they have failed in the implemental policies, they carry out such mottoes.

[AKHBAR] We are grateful for the time you have given us for this interview.

Semnan Election Supervisory Board Members Named

96LA0107B Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 10 Dec 95 p 3

[FBIS Translated Text] **Semnan, IRNA—The Supervisory Board for the Fifth Majles elections in various cities of the province of Semnan began its work.**

Mohammad Hoseyn Kataha'i, a member of the Supervisory Board for the Fifth Majles elections in the province of Semnan, said: Eleven members of the Supervisory Board for the elections for four election zones have been selected.

He announced the members of the Supervisory Board in various cities of the province as follows:

Semnan: Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan 'Ali 'Arabi, 'Abdolhoseyn Khalesi, and 'Ali Mohammad Zolfaqari;
Garmsar: Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed 'Abbas Joda'i, 'Ali Arab-Ameri, and Seyyed Abolfazl Mirkamali;
Damghan: Hojjat ol-Eslam Seyyed Ja'far Mir 'Aliakbari, Abolqasem Sarfi, and Abolqasem Qorbani;
Shahrud: Hojjat ol-Eslam Mozaffari and Habib Qazvini. In this district, another person will also be selected.

He announced the members of the Supervisory Board of the Fifth Majles elections in the province of Semnan to include Hojjat ol-Eslam Hasan 'Ali Mazandarani, Hasan Najjar, Hoseyn Khorramian, and himself (Mohammad Hoseyn Kalatha'i).

The official said: In order to discuss and study better and more careful supervision over these elections, the first joint session of the Supervisory Boards of the province was held last week.

He asked the people of the province to present their suggestions and problems regarding the elections in writing or in person to the Supervisory Board for the elections.

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Hazrati's Views on Upcoming Majles Elections

96LA0104B Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 11 Dec 95 pp 1, 3

[FBIS Translated Text] AKHBAR News Network—Elias Hazrati, deputy from Rasht and second deputy chairman of the Islamic Consultative Majles Economic, Financial, and Cooperative Affairs Commission, described as dangerous the tendency by deputies to concern themselves with the problems in their electoral precincts and not to pay attention to overall economic and social policies. He said: In my view, the distancing of the Majles deputies from the nation's basic issues is a kind of depoliticization that is not confined to the universities and will gradually spread to all the responsible bodies and organizations, including the Majles.

In an interview with AKHBAR's parliamentary correspondent, the deputy from Rasht added: If public participation in the framework of political parties becomes officially organized, there will definitely be more desirable results for the country in the various political and economic areas.

Hazrati served as the Islamic Consultative Majles deputy from Rasht in both the Third Majles and the Fourth Majles. He said: In protesting the elections for the Fourth Majles and in not considering current conditions to be appropriate for holding sound elections, the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez] intends not to have candidates in the elections for the Fifth Majles.

With regard to the performance of the Fourth Majles and the previous terms, he said:

Most of the deputies prefer to deal with the problems in their own electoral districts rather than discuss the overall political and social issues. The speeches by the deputies are a limited opportunity to hold discussion on the political issues. If the ones they made a year ago are studied, the level of attention to the nation's overall policies, foreign policy, overall economic issues, and administrative policies will become clear. We will also see to what extent effort has been directed toward problems in the electoral precincts in the framework of memos and requests made of the ministries and the ministers. Therefore, this matter was and is a basic defect in the Fourth Majles.

While in the Fourth Majles an effort was made to keep political, group, and factional differences from taking on the air of confrontation, at the same time there was an effort to prevent harsh time-consuming confrontations, debates, and physical clashes, but the extremism and excesses in this area actually led to overall political issues being seen as something counter to values, while they saw any deputy who was not much involved in political matters as being a successful deputy.

Yet in my view discussing overall policies is one of the major duties of the deputies. Perhaps there is nothing more dangerous than for a deputy to boast to himself that he was a Majles deputy for four years and dealt with nothing other than the problems in his own electoral precinct.

A deputy should have something to say politically. He should critique the various points of view so that through critiques of the nation's political figures, including the Majles deputies, the difference between the pure and the tainted will be clear to the nation. Otherwise, the government and our ministers will deal only with executive affairs, the deputies will not get involved in political matters, and even the press will gradually develop a tendency to deal with professional, athletic, and artistic topics and to avoid discussing the issues that have to do with the public's destiny. This is the way the practice develops of keeping the people away from politics and political affairs, which is considered a basic disaster. In my view this practice is a kind of depoliticization which is being encouraged not only in the universities but also in the Majles.

If a student moves in the direction of political issues and political debates and discussions, or if he gets involved in political affairs and acquires a political outlook and political insight, he may not be considered a desirable element by those in charge. Therefore the Majles can be a primary wellspring for promoting and encouraging political thought. In my view the Fourth Majles is quite behind on political issues. When a subject such as the Salman Rushdie debate comes up and when the European governments put pressure on our government, the Majles is silent and cannot express a point of view, until the exalted leader gets involved in the issue. Yet we believe that the Majles should put itself on the leader's path. The leader's views should first be expressed in the views of the Majles, and in the next stage they should be manifested as Majles legislation, yet the Majles has not been very successful in this area.

He added: In reality, the Fourth Majles is at a crossroads with a two-way conflict. On the one hand the majority faction wants to follow and implement the leader's views and on the other hand their closed factional views prevent this. The leader said that the hezbollah forces must be supported, yet the Fourth Majles put the government in such a tight spot that ministers such as Sa'idi-Kia, 'Abdollah Nuri and Khatami, each of whom was the essence of the efficient and hezbollah manager, were not presented to the Majles.

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Continuing, Hazrati added: The Fourth Majles was also unsuccessful in economic areas. If you compare and study the current economic statistics and figures with those of four years ago based on the promises given by the right-wing (majority) faction, it will be obvious that the Majles has had no success in this term. Yet the main focus of the supporters of the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez] (the majority) at that time was that the roots of the economic problems during the Third Majles were in the disputes between the government and the Majles (the supporters of the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez]), while the right-wing faction (the majority) was seeking to cooperate with the government. At that time they promised the people economic prosperity.

In my view, in this regard the people must judge how successful the Fourth Majles was. In any case, during this term first of all the Majles had absolutely no success in cooperating with the government and in bringing out economic prosperity. For example, the problems of growth in currency in circulation, inflation, unemployment, the situation with the poverty line, reduced production and imports and increased imports have all become worse compared to four years ago.

The deputy from Rasht discussed the reasons for the failure of the Fourth Majles to solve the economic problems. He said:

The prevailing faction, which guided and led the Fourth Majles, had no specific theory for managing society's economic problems. From the very beginning, arguing that decentralization had failed, wartime policies had not been successful, that aid (subsidies) and support policies are not a good procedure, that the role of government support should be diminished, and that the policies should be based on the free market, supply and demand and economic adjustment, they negated all of the policies of the past, but in practice they saw that this was not an appropriate policy for the living circumstances of the people in society. Of course successes were achieved in certain areas, but they were not successful in very many areas.

Therefore, without presenting any proven hypotheses, they criticized the existing economic policies, yet they did not set forth any new policies to replace the policies they had supported up until that time. Rather, they were obliged once again to implement monitoring policies and policies to stabilize the foreign exchange rate. Because they did not believe in any of the former foreign exchange and monitoring policies, in reality they created a mixture of the policies of adjustment, foreign exchange rate stabilization, and idealistic policies.

Of course in this term the Majles had successes with managing the Majles sessions, Majles management procedures, maintaining calm and adhering to decorum and courtesy on the part of the deputies, and efforts to apply supervision through research and investigation and questions, the Accounting Court and setting up research centers, although the supervision was at times factional and the effort to do research and investigation did not achieve the desired result. Sometimes research and investigation into such matters as the Central Bank was delayed, in such a way that the former chief of the Central Bank has already taken on another responsibility in a foreign country.

In any case, the outcome that is expected from research and investigation, which is the prevention of damage and the waste of resources, does not exist in the Fourth Majles. Of course these same deficiencies can also be seen in the Second Majles and the Third Majles, and the First Majles is an exception in this respect.

Hazrati described the main roots of the problems in the nation's parliamentary system as follows:

One of the roots of the problems in the parliamentary system is the lack of active political parties. We have a parliamentary system, but we do not have its tools. The first tool in a parliamentary system is the existence of political parties and a party system, because the existence of a party system brings order to elections and promotes greater voter awareness and understanding. In reality this creates an overall program for the candidates, and on the other hand, as a registered body, a political party has a specific secretary, a building, a specific composition, and it accepts responsibility.

Of course it is not the case that the parties are absolutely good, but as a whole they are an important and useful tool for running a country, while at present the deputies act individually because of the lack of parties. It is true that the radical faction (the Militant Clerics Society) formed the outward majority in the Third Majles, while in the Fourth Majles the majority was with the traditional right (the Militant Clergy Association), yet this was the general facade of the situation, while on the inside there were few who kept their factional orientation because the necessary training had not been given to these individuals.

Each one of the deputies, especially in the municipalities, were individual candidates, and currently in the municipalities factional support of candidates is not used much. Rather it is the deputy's effort, performance, record, friends, elders, strong relationships, and promises that will have an effect on the votes for the candidates.

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This consequently establishes a relationship with promises, and it is promises that create hope, determination, and resolution in the voter. When a relationship is established with this method, the deputy is at a crossroads. Should he attend to his main duties as a deputy, meaning the nation's overall policies, the making of overall policy, foreign policy issues, the overall economy, and the nation's administrative system, or should he concern himself with the promises and agreements he has made with the public? If he wants to keep the votes he has gotten, he must adopt the second course. If he pays no attention to the votes, in view of the record of some of the deputies in previous terms, he will not be able to be a deputy for more than one term. For this reason, 80 percent of the deputies prefer to adopt the second course.

On the other hand, dealing with overall political issues and criticizing the bad performance of a minister will not leave him the opportunity to solve the problems in his electoral precinct through the channel of that minister. He therefore tries to keep his relationship with the various ministries at any price, even if that means looking the other way when they commit violations and not supervising them carefully as performance of his primary duties.

Due to the lack of political parties and an organized organization with a program, those who wish to deal with the nation's overall issues are faced with the thousands of various specialist issues that must be presented and resolved every day in the Majles. Consequently, for this group the only way left is to consult with the experts in the ministries. Naturally, the ministry experts give the views of their ministries, which are sector-based views, without taking the nation's overall problems into consideration.

With regard to the factions in the Fourth Majles, he said: About 110 of the deputies in the Fourth Majles make up the traditional right-wing faction (the Militant Clergy Association), about 30 make up the minority faction (the Militant Clerics Society), and about 100 individuals are independents. The moderate or independents are divided into two groups. One group is the moderate faction, lately known as the technocrats, which in my view is not an appropriate term. This group is made up of individuals who do not accept the traditional right (Militant Clergy Association) or the radical faction (the Militant Clerics Society). While they are in competition with the traditional right and the left, they also have a series of beliefs in common with the two sides. The independent or moderate faction is given to reflection and ideas and has a political and economic policy. It thinks and decides independently. This group mainly cooperates with the government. The second group of independents tends to float. This group is mostly individuals who either have no political policy or prefer not to show a policy. A number of them have no background in political affairs. They deal only with executive and technical tasks. Others pursue election tasks in order to retain their votes.

The deputy from Rasht discussed the existing views concerning the technocrats. He said: The view right now concerning the technocrats is that they are individuals educated in the West with Western beliefs. In the mind of the public, they are thought to place their hopes in the West. Their techniques, sciences, and knowledge have become pervasive in the academic centers, and they are knowledgeable about the issues of governing. However, the technocrats discussed in the newspapers over the last few months are different. This in reality is an election tactic to eliminate competition. One day it is said that a certain person is against the vice regency of the chief jurisconsult, a technocrat, against the clergy and a hardliner. These are some of the labels that unfortunately rivals are applying to one another in the elections. In my view this is a kind of branding of the individuals who are now being subjected to this phenomenon.

Technocrats are not people who have recently come into the political arena. These people have held positions of responsibility since the beginning of the revolution, and now also they hold various positions of responsibility, such as ministry positions, Majles deputy, general manager, and other things. Until yesterday the technocrats, or the modernist right, have been in harmony with the traditional right which has called them the technocrats, and they were part of this faction, but for the Fifth Majles the technocrats, or the modernist right, who plan to introduce candidates independently, have been called technocrats by their rivals.

Those who want to form a new group, and these are also experienced individuals, have held various positions of responsibility in the country for the last two years, and they still do. In reality the art and even the distinction and the positive aspect of the moderate faction is that they have been flexible. They have easily worked in the past both with the leftist faction (the Militant Clerics Society) and with the rightist faction (the Militant Clergy Association). This faction does not believe in the extremism and the excesses of these two factions, and it accepts neither the extremism of the rightist faction nor the excesses of the leftist faction.

He described his interpretation of the election competition for the next Majles term as follows:

I believe that there is intense competition between the traditional right and the modern right (the moderates) and that the moderate faction, in order to solve the

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nation's problems and difficulties and relying on its experience and knowledge, has a program and has claims to make. In the last few months, in order to display its presence in the forthcoming elections, it has taken actions that have truly made the traditional right feel threatened. For this reason, they have begun calling the moderate faction the modernist right, saying that these people (the modernist right) are technocrats who want relations with America and want to separate religion from politics.

With regard to the failure by the Militant Clerics Society to present candidates for the Fifth Majles, Hazrati said: Of course I have no first-hand knowledge of the decisions and policies of the Militant Clerics Society, but in my view, in reality the Militant Clerics Society is protesting the elections to the Fourth Majles, and they believe that conditions have not yet been created for holding sound elections in which they can also participate, and that the conditions prevailing at that time have not changed much.

He was asked about the fact that some believe that the reason the Militant Clerics Society has not presented candidates is because of differing views within the society. He said: After their defeat in the elections for the Fourth Majles, the Militant Clerics Society did not seek to form a strong political organization and renew their power. For reasons of their own, they primarily sought to withdraw and remain silent.

Iraj Fazel's Views on Parties in Upcoming Elections

96LA0103A Tehran AKHBAR in Persian 13 Dec 95 pp 1, 3, 4

[Interview with Dr. Iraj Fazel by unidentified correspondent "in his work room at the Iran Medical Sciences Academy" on 26 November — first eight paragraphs are AKHBAR introduction]

[FBIS Translated Text] Dr. Iraj Fazel is from Ardestan, but he considers himself an Esfahani. He completed his middle and elementary school education in Esfahan.

He is a physician, known very well to the people by name and through his work in the years since the triumph of the revolution.

In 1336 [21 March 1957 - 20 March 1958], Dr. Fazel entered the Tehran University college of medicine. After his education he served in the most remote parts of Kordestan. He says: "While there, first I realized what generosity an Iranian has and second I understood the delight of serving deprived people."

He worked for a period of time at Tabriz University. Then he went to the United States, and in that country he acquired the advanced specialization of general surgery and connecting joints and ligaments. Until the time of the triumph of the revolution he taught in an American university as a lecturer.

He says: "When revolutionary fervor came to Iran, even though I had a job, an income, and desirable respect in the United States, I did not hesitate for even one moment to return."

In the time of the war he was in charge of Mostafa Khomeyni Hospital, which did valuable work treating combatant patients. He was also minister of health for one term in Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani's cabinet. Then he became chief of Iran's Medical System Organization.

On Monday 5 Azar [26 November], Dr. Fazel received us in his work room at the Iran Medical Sciences Academy. He spoke sincerely and comfortably.

It is obvious that Dr. Fazel wants technicians to be a part of the structure of political and cultural activities.

[AKHBAR] The elections for the Fifth Majles are about to take place. On the eve of these elections, there is already talk in society concerning the differences between the Fourth Majles and the Fifth Majles and the political groups in the Majles. Could you state your views on this?

[Fazel] This may be one of the most important issues existing in society. Any way we view the matter, the role of the Majles is fateful in determining the nation's destiny. In the experience that we have had during the revolution, in the four terms that have been completed so far, we have seen the extent to which the quality of the work of the Majles can play an effective role in the political culture, in the country's management, in the work of the government, and in cooperation with the government. In view of the fact that we have been through various stages since the revolution and are in the reconstruction stage, the composition of the Fifth Majles is quite crucial.

[AKHBAR] Part of my question is about the past, and part of it is about the future. What is your comparison of the Third Majles with the Fourth Majles, which is presently active, and then of the Fourth Majles with what you think will be the shape of the Fifth Majles?

[Fazel] I think that fortunately, with the exception of the First Majles, in general in all the elections that have been held for Majles terms we have gone through a desirable situation. Now, because of the public awareness, because of their attention to their destiny, or for whatever other reason, the quality of the Majles has improved in every election. There are also indicators concerning this statement. A comparison of the educational backgrounds of the deputies in each

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term shows the direction in which we are going. The deputies of the Fourth Majles had many distinctions in this respect compared to the Third Majles. This is hopeful. There is no reason for us not to hope that we will move ahead again and make progress to the same extent or even much greater in the Fifth Majles compared to the Fourth Majles. I think we will have a Majles that will fulfill its role and work with greater coordination with those who build the nation.

The Majles can be the greatest help to the nation's executive managers. It can be neutral toward their work, or, God forbid, it can be in conflict with the nation's executive activity. The result of all these things is related to the public. The groups that have responsibilities fulfill their roles and go, but the result, what remains, belongs to the public. Some of the results are short-term, and some of the results are effective over the long term. If they are good, they will bring goodness and blessings to the people. If they are not good, the effects will remain for years. The imam said rightly that the Majles is at the head of affairs. It is just this way, but at the same time the imam said you should elect the deputies in such a way that it will be like Modarres.

We cannot take one part and abandon the other. A Majles should be put at the head of affairs that has deputies like the late Modarres, deputies who have complete political awareness, meaning they should have no thought of anything but the nation's advancement. They should understand conditions and have something more in mind than forming class-based political factions, namely the benefit and interest of the public.

[AKHBAR] To what extent can the Majles play a role opposite the executive power that can expedite, coordinate and prevent? As to the question of whether or not the people will vote with awareness, the problem the groups are raising now is that in the elections for the Fifth Majles they are not giving all the groups the opportunity to get involved. As a result, the people will not be able to vote with one hand free, nor can they go to the polls with the full power to elect the Majles.

[Fazel] I have no knowledge of any elements that would bring about the idea that a group can or can not take part in the elections. In my view, the nature of the qualifications for those who are electable are truly clear, and if someone has these qualifications, he must be able freely to volunteer for being elected in these elections, and to go through the phases of being elected according to the logical and lawful procedures.

In the elections some of those who volunteer are familiar figures. In other words, the people vote for this individual because they know him. This is the best type of election. However, many people place their trust in the recommendations of certain individuals. For example, suppose a social and political group supports a group of individuals. It is possible that many of those who vote will write the names of those very individuals and vote for them. This provides an approximation that competent individuals will get into the Majles, but it is still a type of blind voting. The individual who votes for these candidates is electing them not based on personal knowledge, but rather with confidence and reliance on the recommendations of others. Would that it were possible for those who volunteer to be Majles candidates would themselves stand up to the judgment of public opinion, whether by means of the media, the newspapers, or television debates.

In my view, we act weakly in this regard. Merely printing a few brochures, making placards, and posting photos on the doors and walls does not clarify anything. Let us mention an individual's past and let this be the criterion for the public's judgment. Sometimes the public actually has no information about the things we mention as an individual's virtues.

For example, it is said that someone had a certain responsibility in the past. We write this responsibility as a positive point, but it is possible that certain individuals may say that this candidate was a destructive person in his work or that in that responsibility he did destructive things. The people do not see this. They only see that he had a certain important and very basic responsibility. I think that if we were able to invest a little more in the introduction of the candidates and informing the people, perhaps we would be more successful in making people as familiar as possible with a person's background.

[AKHBAR] In referring to the lack of such a climate, do you mean that the political atmosphere is not open, or do you mean that the lack of a possibility for group participation or activity has found an organized expression? What I mean by this is groups and political or social bodies or political parties themselves. Does it not appear that we have a shortage of political parties in the nation's political atmosphere?

[Fazel] Of course. It has always seemed to me that if, in accordance with the law there were political parties who could present their programs officially, put their ideas before public opinion and defend their positions, that would be a very good thing. This exists everywhere in the world, and clearly that is missed in our country. Why don't we have political parties? This is a question that must be answered by persons who are more political than I am. I have never been very political. However, as an ordinary citizen and a university professor, I would very much like political parties to be active.

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[AKHBAR] As a technocrat citizen who does scientific and university work, if you were a member of a political party, what characteristics would you prefer in that party?

[Fazel] If a political party means that a person blindly accepts a series of ideas and beliefs, I personally do not ever wish to be part of any party. However, if what is meant by political party is a way to express the ideas and beliefs of the public, that is a different matter. Therefore, this depends entirely on the nature of the party that is formed. If a party were formed one day that did not eclipse my freedom of thought and also permitted my free thinking to remain in the party, I would join it.

[AKHBAR] There is now an active faction known as the Militant Clerics Society [Majma'e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez] and another active faction known as the Militant Clergy Association [Jameh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez]. They say they are not parties, but in effect they do the work of the political parities. As an individual who has sometimes held executive and political positions of responsibility, how do you see the work being done in the two aforementioned factions as unofficial parties? Can these two factions be seen as parties?

[Fazel] In my view, these two cannot be seen as political parties. It appears that these groups were primarily formed based on a set of political and social preferences. In my view, however, a political party must have other properties and specific doctrines. For example, it must stipulate a direction for the nation's future. It must present a specific program to the public that states what it will defend and what it will stand up against. There are so many ambiguities in these formations that in my opinion it is not very correct to view them as political parties. In my view their activities are good. Ultimately this in itself also means that individuals will to some extent be able to present a political preference, and the people will also be able to judge and to show their inclinations.

[AKHBAR] You said that a party has a doctrine, a statement of aims, and a charter. Are the factions whose names have been mentioned moving forward without charters or theses? Is this a proper procedure? Can these methods be effective and desirable for the country?

[Fazel] I actually assume that these are political parties. It is always this way, that a party that is successful behaves in one way with the government or the executive apparatus, and an opposition party behaves in another way. In previous terms we saw this happening in the form of the application of taste, where sometimes in some circumstances the Majles did not give the necessary cooperation to the executive power, or at other times it was mostly in harmony.

Clearly, if the Majles and the executive power are working well together, this will be good for the people. When they are in opposition to one another, the process of confrontation is that all energy is spent defending and there is none left for constructive effort. I had executive responsibility in two terms and I sensed this very well. Sometimes, when the Majles was somehow cooperating and thinking in the same way, it was so much easier for one to work. I had the experience where all of the energy in the ministry was allocated to an opposition group, and this leaves absolutely no opportunity to do any work for the country.

Sometimes, individuals have come into the Majles only to make trouble, and making trouble is the only thing they have done. These people were never competent to be Majles deputies. They were elected with those same false credentials I mentioned, and through the brochures they gave to the public. They have never done anything but make trouble in all the Majles terms. All of these things have caused the energy of an executive official to be spent on things which can only be called a waste of time. They ask pointless questions of a person who must plan and do basic work for the country. Answering these questions takes up the time of a minister or an official, yet the questions are empty and without any basis.

[AKHBAR] Some candidates come into the Majles as deputies and get control of commissions. These are mostly individuals who did not get into the Majles through a special party organization. They therefore have no special political, economic, or social charter, nor are they within a political party and in reality they are without intellectual backing. Even the views and the votes they give inside the Majles are not based on expert work. Even these theories, votes, and recommendations from the deputies which were presented without expert work have previously been passed and have caused executive problems at the point of implementation. Don't you think that this in reality is the very thing that necessitates the existence of parties which must design a special statement of aims with a specific policy, which we do not presently have? Hasn't the absence of this brought countries up against difficulties at various times?

[Fazel] I have my individual ideas in these matters, but they cannot be taken at all as criteria. There is no doubt that the more aware the public is and the more it considers itself responsible for its own destiny, the less we will have of these failures. Now are political parties required to reach this goal, or something else? We must also take the nation's circumstances into consideration.

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Actually, in our country's past, the people did not have very good experiences with the political parties. In other words, it is possible that in another corner of the world parties were formed, they performed this duty with power, and were also successful.

However, if our party is to have the same characteristics, in this country that will be a new experience. We must prove that if the party is formed, its performance will be something that the people want. However, we may be assured that most of the people, like me, will look with hesitation upon this at first. The party will have to operate for years and prove to the people that it has not come about as a passing wave that wants to ride the waves and reach its professional objectives, but rather that it wants to manage the country. I am not even sure that if a party were to come into existence, anyone would be interested in reaching its goals. Certainly this cannot be achieved in a short period of time. However, ultimately this is a task that we must begin and master profoundly. We must study all the individuals carefully, and with the public's political genius, we will be able to traverse this path.

[AKHBAR] You said that in our country, the political parties have not given the people a good experience, meaning that they do not have a good record.

On the other hand, you said that in the first terms, people came into the Majles who were troublemakers, intending only to disrupt, ask useless questions and take up the time of the Majles and the executive power. On the other hand, these people were chosen by the public. In other words, they came into the Majles through the direct vote of the public. Therefore, the way of thinking is gaining force that perhaps it would be better if we put the candidates through numerous filters and selections from the beginning; it is possible that the result of this will be in the interest of one political way of thinking. In one sense, this is interference in the public vote. What is your view of this?

[Fazel] I think the people who come and take part in the elections are the country's best foundation. In other words, they are people who have a sense of responsibility and a sense that they are working on a task that will determine the nation's destiny.

[AKHBAR] However, even a person with a sense of responsibility can still make a mistake.

[Fazel] That is correct, but will they vote correctly or not? In my view, this is not the public's sin. We must create the possibility for these people who feel a sense of responsibility and who go to the polls also to have awareness.

The voter is not to be blamed. Our problem is elsewhere. If an authentic vote is one where a person goes to the polls and votes with complete faith and with pure intentions but does not know who he is voting for, this is not to be considered an authentic vote. In reality, we have pulled a vote out of this individual, but we have given him insufficient information. If we accompany this process with full information so that every person and individual who wants to vote can know well the individual for whom he wishes to vote, this is an authentic vote. On the one hand, it is not necessary for every voter to write the name of a prince. Even if he knows one individual, he can write the name of one individual. If he doesn't know the second individual, he need not write the name.

Even if he does not know anyone, he can cast a blank ballot. Casting a vote for people we do not know is the same thing, and later that creates problems for us, both for the people and for the Majles. In societies such as ours, in my view the heaviest responsibility is promoting awareness. In this regard there is a heavy responsibility on the shoulders of the media. There should be debates added to the television programming. When someone wants to be a candidate for president of the republic, they should schedule a television debate for him, and they should do the same thing for the Majles so that at least the public can gain familiarity with him in this form.

Let them see how he speaks, and what his reactions to this question might be. Of course this is not all of the requirements, but many things can be understood through a debate that many people do not know. At the same time, in my view the kind of freedom does not exist that lets any person with any qualification get into the Majles. How did the bitter experiences we have had because of the entry of certain deputies come about? We thought we were complying with the authentic vote. I do not know the solution, but any person wishing to go into the Majles must have minimum qualifications. These include social insight, faith in the revolution and this country's destiny; he must believe that we must stand on our own feet, and we must accept the greatest legacy of the revolution, meaning national independence.

We must be aware that if someone spends a lot to be elected, in my view this is not a competent person. He must have some expectations if he wants to go into the Majles with insistence. Going and working does not have this much passion and enthusiasm. If an individual spends a great deal, this is a sign that he will not meet the needs of the Majles. If this person was a person of great distinction, the mere mention of his name would be enough to make a decision about voting. Thus there are indications that can help resolve the question of who

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is the best person to vote for. In my view, the people will vote for as many people as they know, no matter how limited in number they may be.

[AKHBAR] May we thus conclude that you are in agreement with groups and election filters?

[Fazel] If the groups are sound and if they are not on the line of political affiliations, this is the best thing; in other words, they should be impartial. I think under existing circumstances, we have groups that can do this selection. Of course anyone you reject for any reason will brand you by saying "I was the best person; you didn't want me because I was not with them; I was not with this group or that group."

In this country, as vast as it is and in our existing circumstances, we must have neutral organizations that can remove an individual who is not competent. When I speak of this competence, I am not talking about being in agreement or opposition to a particular individual or group. The important thing is whether one comes to the Majles with good intentions and the interest of society in mind or with personal objectives.

[AKHBAR] Wouldn't it be better for us to reform the election system, especially in the huge city of Tehran, and to divide the municipality of Tehran into 30 regions, permitting each of them to send a deputy to the Majles?

[Fazel] First of all, I do not believe a person has made a mistake if he does not write a name 30 times on a ballot. If a person knows only one candidate, then he should vote only for him. The greatest mistake is to fill out a list. If a person does not know someone, let him cast a blank ballot. The criterion is participation and expression of interest, but if I personally do not know a person, I will cast a blank ballot. This is better than not going, and I think the worst defect in elections like this is for the people to go and get lists and elect candidates based on that, without knowing who these individuals are. This is the greatest calamity. Even if they know two people, it is better that they write the names of just those two.

[AKHBAR] Perhaps the people act this way because they trust the presenting authority who has given the list.

[Fazel] That is correct. However, this also depends on the people having deep familiarity with that authority. If there is an individual who has complete familiarity with that authority and writes in a candidate's name with heartfelt faith in that authority, that is good. In any case, however, I do not see this as a virtue in the elections. The result will be that many individuals will submit ballots without knowing the consequences.

As for the question of what procedures we should use for the elections and the issue of dividing Tehran into regions, the aspects should be studied, and if it is practical it should be proposed to the officials as a new procedure so they can also study the matter. If this type of election is better, let them have this type of election.

[AKHBAR] Do you mean that in the elections we have held, the people have been more interested in chatting than the elections?

[Fazel] No, this is not what I mean. However, perhaps some people write the names of people they do not personally know. If every voter were certain that every vote he writes is for someone he knows, these problems would be solved. No matter what form it takes, whether from a list or without a list, writing names the voter doesn't know has been a problem with the elections. This is also due to our defective way of conveying information to the people, for we do not keep the public informed of the way these things work. If a candidate for a position as Majles deputy prints a flyer and lists ten important positions he has held, they will not study this and tell the people to what extent he has been successful in those positions.

The mere fact that I held a position in a ministry or was chief or deputy chief somewhere does not give me credibility. If I were a successful and constructive person, this is excellent, but the reverse is also possible. In the first case, I may be worthy of going into the Majles, and in the second case I am not. I said twice in the Majles that sometimes some positions of responsibility serve a person as bridges to the next position. It is not important at all what he did in the past or what he is doing here. We have had cases in the past where they gave positions of responsibility to people without credentials, because they create credentials for them so they can use those false credentials to get into the Majles, just to make trouble. We have had this experiences in the past. How will the people know? We must make the people aware somehow.

[AKHBAR] It is better to oppose such a phenomenon, where the candidates come and present themselves by campaigning and uttering a few slogans, solely for the purpose of getting into the Majles. Once in the Majles, they do things that have nothing to do with those slogans and that campaigning they did. What authority or authorities do you think should take these methods to task and deal with such a phenomenon?

[Fazel] We have these organizations. One of the duties of the nation's cultural organizations, of which there are many, is to select and implement ways whose result is to raise public awareness. We have a ministry for this task; we have organizations and bodies that are involved

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in these tasks, and if they do their jobs, many of these problems will be solved. What way is there other than to make public opinion grow and give working knowledge to the public? Many of these things, these malfunctions, are due to ignorance. When the light of knowledge is lit, all the problems are solved. This is a cultural task, and cultural work is not such that it has one specific way. All of the cultural organizations in the nation must decide to adopt the various methods and productive processes that exist so that when someone comes to the ballot box he will able to vote with greater awareness.

Another issue is the creation of public confidence and hope and putting value on the nation's political destiny; we must make effort to develop these things and to create these phenomena.

[AKHBAR] The media, including the press, are assuredly among the authorities who must do these things you mention. Do you think the press and other media have been able to carry out their responsibility? If not, why?

[Fazel] Let me state plainly that the answer is negative. There has been no single reason; rather there are numerous reasons for this. Actually, the desire to read a newspaper is not common except among a special class. For example, as an official in the Medical System Organization, I have noticed that many of our physicians do not look at a newspaper at all. In other words, we certainly cannot inform our colleagues about something by putting an advertisement in a newspaper. We therefore have no choice but to find another way. I do not know what percentage of university professors and teachers read newspapers. This is not a reliable solution. I think the press has nothing worth reading. If they had something worth reading, everyone would be reading them. It is not right that if you obtain a newspaper, it is as if you have read all of the newspapers.

[AKHBAR] In this regard, after the series of purges that have taken place in society, we are now on the threshold of elections to the Fifth Majles. Currently they have put these elections in apposition to a phenomenon known as the technocrats, as if the technocrats are a danger waiting to ambush the Fifth Majles. In your view, to what extent is our society today in need of the technocrats, and to what extent can we do without the technocrats?

[Fazel] I think the more awareness and knowledge a deputy has, the better he can do his work. I mean awareness and knowledge of the nation, the world situation and the sciences today. We must not forget that we live in a world where the level of this nation's knowledge will be determinative. We must realize that whatever vast resources we may have, if we have the most powerful army in the world, even if we have all the mines in the world, we will be behind that person who is ahead of us in science and technology. If what we mean by technocrat is that anyone with an education is a technocrat and has no place in the Majles, this is completely wrong. If we are worried that the people we call technocrats are dangerous, this is pointless. This itself is worthy of reflection. It seems that we are branding a group of people as liberals, but we don't know what is meant by the term liberal. As soon as the debate begins, however, we call someone a liberal.

We have never defined the term liberal, to say what it means. If what is meant is the dictionary definition, which is an orientation towards freedom, is not a bad thing for us to play with these terms. We put words into the mouths of the people, without defining them so the people will know what they mean. When we say technocrat, what do we mean? What do we mean when we say liberal? Must we view these phenomena as a monster? In any case, it is a good requirement that a person be sincere. This is a very important and good requirement, but one must also have intelligence and understanding to be a good deputy for the people.

[AKHBAR] The late Modarres was, in that time, a strong supporter of new ideas.

[Fazel] I do not know if we have technology in that sense or not. It has been 17 years since the revolution. We must enlarge these circles somewhat. We cannot have very many competent individuals in circles with small radii. As an official, I cannot work with small circles. I am forced to enlarge the radius so more individuals can come in and we can select individuals who will meet the needs of the public. We are faced with this matter in several places. When we speak of the noble nation of Iran, we are talking about the people walking on the streets. Every individual who comes into your room is one of the individuals of the noble nation of Iran. You must stand up before him, pay him homage and honor him. We have extensive human greatness. We cannot find what is desired by the nation in very small circles containing limited numbers of individuals. We must expand them, and as soon as we are about to extend the radius, issues like liberalism and technocrats come up. We have a very bright future. This is one of the characteristics of this nation, that these people with this bit of knowledge and these insignificant expectations will work night and day. This very thing is one of the characteristics of the Islamic Republic.

There are many choice individuals who can go into the Majles and accept responsibility. We must not restrict positions of responsibility to a special group. New

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people must come into public life; we must extend the radius and let them come and show themselves.

[AKHBAR] They say that parties and parliaments are a Western phenomenon, and that all the executive systems are also Western. If technocrats were to come into this system taken from the West, it is possible that this might entail dangers. Do you think this danger of which they speak is real?

[Fazel] Who says this? If we think that any person who has knowledge is not suitable, while whoever has the least knowledge is more sincere, this is an inappropriate idea. Today's world is a world of knowledge. How will we benefit by sending very sincere but unaware individuals to the Majles?

The result of doing this will be passing laws that will cause problems for the people for the next 50 years. We have no shortage of laws in the country. We have many laws. However, why are many of them not enforced today? Do we not have a traffic law? Why is our driving situation so chaotic? We want a thoughtful Majles that will take what is good and in the public interest into consideration instead of drawing political lines of confrontation between this group and that group. If the Majles is aware, laws will never come out of it that are crippling for the public.

At one time the Majles approved a law that said the number of medical students will remain the same for five more years, and I complained about this legislation. What kind of law is this? This decision is damaging for the nation. This is not the task of the Majles. If the Majles passes laws like this, the people of this nation will have to answer for the damage caused by this law for the next century. The nation is now falling apart due to the excess of physicians. Then we come and pass a law that says not to reduce their numbers, while all of the executive organizations and officials are against this. Very well, then the Majles comes and enacts this.

If we consider ourselves the guardians of the people and think it is in the interest of the public to know something or not know it, we have not understood the people. This thinking is the product of minds who consider themselves much higher than the people and who underestimate the people. The people have great capacity, and one of the things afflicting us is this very thing, that we think it is not in the interest of the people for them to know about some things. The people understand, but understand through a way that has problems.

We create an artificial context in which anyone can spread any rumor in any form. We must give assurances to the people, and the people have very high intelligence in this respect. When we do not tell the truth to the public, we are not behaving fairly. When we tell people things for the sake of prevention, they accept it with such patience and such love, and they are so cooperative. I must say that because of the history of the past, we still have not understood the true value of each person in this nation. In other words, we have a lot of work to do on the principle of the greatness of human beings and in learning to value each person and the truth.

[AKHBAR] Some political observers, particularly former Majles deputies, believe that if the technocrats make their way into the Majles, this will mean that relations with the United States will gradually be established, or they will spread the idea of separating religion from politics. In other words, this is the reason they are opposed to the entry of the technocrats; they see a kind of danger in the presence of the technocrats. What is your view of this?

[Fazel] Perhaps some people see a danger to themselves, rather than the nation, in the presence of this group.

I don't know if this idea is out of concern for the nation or for the ones who think the same way in one's group, because each person attributes the situation that he himself wants to others. We have had the experience that an individual can make great use of chaotic conditions. It can also be said that in extraordinary circumstances such as wartime, in those inflammatory conditions it is possible that individuals will create disruptions. Now however, and in ordinary conditions, it is not this way. I personally think that concerning the question of whether we do or do not establish relations with another country, if our principles are not disregarded we can have relations with the entire world. If the meaning of relations is that as the result of those relations, the principles of our national and political independence are endangered, then we certainly ought not to have relations, with America or any other country. Currently our intelligence and awareness are at a level where we need not be very concerned about these issues.

Finally, I personally have had the experience that whenever we leave the elections free, the elections of the people will be the best elections. Whenever and wherever we make things complicated, problems appear. If, as we claim, we trust the judgment of the people, we must let the people elect. In my view, there is that level of awareness in the public that we cannot put limits on the tastes of the people, saying it is good for the people to like this and it is good for them not to like that.

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[AKHBAR] With the very important outlook that we have concerning the Fifth Majles, what is your assessment of the Fifth Majles.

[Fazel] The role the Fifth Majles will have in any case will be the most fateful role that any of our Majleses has yet had. I don't know how it can be conveyed to the people that this time we have a new period.

[AKHBAR] Why?

[Fazel] The reasons are quite numerous, but my personal inference is that this Majles will have a more important role than all of our previous Majleses. We are now implementing the Second Five-Year Plan, we have the elections for president of the republic before us and there are also very many other factors. We have put the war completely behind us. To implement the Five-Year Plan and advance the nation's affairs we will need extensive help and very serious support from the Majles. The Majles can play an extraordinarily effective role. For a group or an executive official to have a congenial group in the Majles would be the greatest support, and if it is other than this, it will be the greatest work disruption. I am very hopeful and optimistic about the outcome of these elections.

There are few places in the world where the people analyze phenomena this well. If you go into the rural areas, even in the forests, the person who gathers firewood knows almost as much as the one who reads the newspaper every day. Sometimes I meet these people in the rural areas of Yasuj. For example I speak with an individual and I see that he is fully informed. He knows about everything that is happening in the country. In such conditions if the people are ready, and they are, and especially if they know how important these elections can be for each individual, naturally they will come and we will have popular elections. If someone says "the people are making a mistake and I must guide the people," that is something else. It is another thing, however, to claim that the people will act on my personal taste. Therefore, we must simply inform the people, and then let the people make their own choices. I believe that if we leave the people free they will act in the best way.

[AKHBAR] Is there anything else you would like to say with regard to the elections?

[Fazel] Through the Medical System Organizations, we have encouraged our colleagues to announce it if they know anyone who considers himself qualified. If the physicians can come into the Majles, I think this will be a good accumulation. We have therefore encouraged the Medical System Organization, within the limits of its work, to send the individuals they believe to have these qualifications. However, we have not yet raised this issue in the Supreme Medical System Organization Council. Certainly, when we are a little bit closer to the elections, it is likely that we also will present our own deputies in the media. We also did this in the previous elections.

[AKHBAR] We thank you for answering our questions.

Mohsen Hashemi on Duties of Special Inspection Bureau

96LA0097A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 13 Dec 95 p 3

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The director of the Special Inspection Bureau of [the] Presidential Office, Mohsen Hashemi says in the course of the Fifth Majles elections, the Bureau has only the task of providing information to the President, and it will not interfere in the executive affairs of the elections at all.

"The decision has been made on the basis of the duties of the President as regards inspection and supervision of proper enforcement of all the laws and is not considered interference in the supervision by the Guardians Council and the executive boards of the Interior Ministry," he told IRNA in an interview.

He said supervision over the elections rests with the Guardians Council according to the Constitution. "The President's willingness to be informed of the election process is not incompatible with any of the Constitutional Articles," he noted.

"Hundreds of inspectors will collect information in all the constituencies and if suspicious and abnormal cases are observed they will be reported to Mr. Hashemi-Rafsanjani," he said, adding that if necessary the President will give orders to the agencies concerned to follow them up. To ensure the follow up of cases of violations, the Special Inspection Bureau will pursue the course of the follow up too, he stressed.

He said abusing government resources, bias of the executive boards, bias of the Guardians Council supervisors, factional approach of local officials, clashes of the officials of the constituencies, clashes between candidates and suspicious replacement of local officials were among cases of possible violation.

Hashemi said the thorough supervision by the Special Inspection Bureau of the elections was not anything new and it was carried out in the Fourth Majles elections too.

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Hashemi Further Details Role of Inspection Bureau

96LA0097B Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
14 Dec 95 pp 1, 13

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The system's credibility hinges on the impartiality of the executive officials and the free and fair holding of elections based on the law, Director of the President's Office of Special Inspection Bureau, Mohsen Hashemi said here yesterday.

Speaking exclusively to IRAN NEWS, Hashemi referred to the importance the President attaches to the authenticity and soundness of elections.

"The President's close supervision over the elections is not a novel phenomenon, as it was conducted over the fourth term Majles (Parliament) elections without too much publicity" the director pointed out.

As a result, the Special Inspection Bureau has the needed experience to carry out this task, being well versed with all its related issues, Hashemi noted.

During the previous Majles elections, inspection and supervision was conducted with the help of hundreds of select inspectors in all constituencies, he stressed.

Hashemi elaborated on the serious use made of the information forwarded to the Bureau by the Law Enforcement Forces, the Ministry of Information, the Islamic Republic News Agency (IRNA), the Islamic Republic Guards Corps (IRGC), and the offices of the governors-general, governors, and district officials.

In this way, President Hashemi-Rafsanjani closely monitored the elections and made arrangements for necessary measures when needed, the director explained.

Hashemi, the eldest son of the President, added, "This time, however, public notice was given on election supervision which commenced from about 5 months before the elections."

The early start of [the] election monitoring process will contribute to the timely presentation of information—particularly that provided by the people—to the Special Inspection Bureau and in turn to the President, he emphasized.

Meticulous plans have also been devised to make greater use of the computer network for data collection and analysis, he said.

Such a system will enable the issuance of reports on cases like abuse of government facilities, partiality of executive delegations and Guardians Council supervisors, one-sided party-affiliated and political tendencies of local and national officials, he remarked.

Other cases, Hashemi said, include, clash among officials of the constituencies, or betweeen these officials and the candidates, unjustified reshuffling of local officials, moves by counterrevolutionaries, assessment of the performance of the officials in holding free and fair elections, as well as other possible cases that might come up in due time and based on experiences and suggestions.

Supervision and inspection has been in progress for a month, he marked, adding that correspondence has also been made with all officials in charge and a considerable number of local, popular, organizational reports have been forwarded to the Bureau, all of which are now computerized.

Effort has been made for immediate presentation of any important news item and the latest election-related events to the President, the director maintained.

With such information available, the President will be able to take necessary measures through the Bureau or through other bodies, if deemed exigent, Hashemi remarked.

The director accentuated that the authenticity and soundness of the elections will be guaranteed only through respect for and implementation of the law.

Monitoring the elections is not related to Article 127 of the Constitution, he noted and added that one of the prerogatives of the President is to appoint inspectors and supervisors to guarantee proper implementation of the law.

The Bureau's monitoring elections is not interference in the supervision of the Guardians Council and executive delegations of the Ministry of Interior, he stressed.

The Special Inspection Bureau merely has the duty to present information to the President and will not interfere in executive affairs, Hashemi concluded.

Fair Elections Said Only Way To Enhance System's Credibility

96LA0097C Tehran IRAN NEWS in English
14 Dec 95 p 2

[Editorial: "Free Elections, Not Factional Victories, Bring Credit"]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Ambiguity erupted with the announcement of the appointment of Mohsen Hashemi as director of the Special Inspection Bureau of [the] Presidential Office. He has been assigned to gather the necessary information related to the 8 March elections of the Fifth Term of the Majles.

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There is a definite line between the duties of the respected Guardians Council and the bureau headed by Hashemi. As the election date approaches, election fever is running through the nation particularly in political and media circles.

We have noticed that government officials in our country seem to be anxious for holding free and fair parliamentary elections in a strictly democratic atmosphere. This is a sign of a healthy society.

During the last three months, it was alleged that the Interior Ministry had made major changes in its administration. The ministry is directly responsible for holding all elections in the country.

It was often alleged that the Interior Ministry has issued transfer orders for provincial governors-general, governors, district officials and others. But the fact is that it was just an allegation which could not be substantiated.

It is to be noted that the present provincial officials mostly belong to the 'Left Wing'. The predecessors of Interior Minister 'Ali Mohammad Besharati used to be considered members of the 'Left Wing'.

Anyway, the transfer orders were definitely issued by the Interior Ministry headed by Besharati. But, they were made purely for administrative purposes. And those transfer orders were just 30 percent compared to those made by Besharati's predecessors on the eve of the elections. The 30 percent change in the administration of the Interior Ministry are routine and will have no undue impact on the elections.

However, certain political circles have shown sensitivity to these changes in the Interior Ministry. The fact is that the world public opinion and political analysts attach significant importance to the supervision and inspection of general elections wherever and whenever they are held.

Iranian elections, particularly parliamentary elections, are assessed and analyzed by international political pundits with great sensitivity and acuteness.

In the light of these facts, election officials shoulder the great responsibility of making sure that the election process is conducted under free and fair conditions without any regard to the influence of individuals, factions and groups.

The elections for the legislative body in any country are considered crucial for laying the foundation of a genuine democracy which is the order of the day. In any country, if the credibility of elections becomes suspect, the entire political fabric of that country will break down.

These officials should note that free and fair elections are the only means to maintain and enhance the credit and prestige of the country's prevailing system—not the victory of this or that faction or group.

Paper Says Karrubi Supports G-16

96LA0143A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 3 Feb 96 pp 1, 13

[News analysis by IRAN NEWS' political commentator]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] A former top lawmaker yesterday supported the G-16 and predicted that the composition of the Fifth Term of the Majles will be in their favor.

Speaker of the Third Term of the Majles, Hojjat ol-Eslam Mehdi Karrubi, said the representatives from Jame-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM), Khedmatgozaran-e Sazandegi or Group-16, left-wingers and independents will enter the Majles after the 8 March elections.

Karrubi, a member in the first, second and third terms of the Majles, was defeated and did not get a seat in the current term of the Parliament.

Majma'-e Rowhaniyun-e Mobarez (MRM) Secretary-General, Karrubi, said that appearance of the G-16 at the election scene add to the vigor and excitement of the entire process.

Karrubi, the former head of the Martyr Foundation, hailed the members of G-16 and said they are revolutionary forces, faithful to the system and servants of the people, and their presence at the election scene should be considered 'a good omen.'

Karrubi, 59, advised the candidates to show sound behavior while engaged in election campaigns and avoid personal bickering or insults.

He said "The entery of government servants in the election process is welcomed by the masses which means that there was a gulf...(and to bridge it) was a necessity for the people."

In an interview with the Farsi-language, IRAN, Karrubi said, "The people want to have their due share in the administration of the country."

"We have issued necessary instructions to the members of the MRM that they may field their candidacy wherever the situation suites them," he said and pointed out that their candidacy will be on an individual basis rather than on behalf of the MRM.

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He said "The reason MRM does not issue a candidates' list is that such a list is not in anybody's interest at this state."

Meanwhile, the G-16 announced that it is at the verge of issuing its list of candidates for the elections.

According to IRAN, an unnamed member of the G-16 said priority will be given to those who have a revolutionary record, are committed to the values of the Islamic Revolution, and have moderate political views, as well as those who are active in the country's reconstruction plans.

He said that G-16 is preparing a list of its candidates comprising of intellectuals and individuals committed to the Imam Khomeyni's thoughts.

Another unnamed member of the G-16 in an interview with IRAN said, "We want a powerful and comprehensive Majles."

"I believe that the reconstruction of the country is a necessity for the development and progress of the Islamic Revolution," he said, adding that an overall development is a guarantee for independence of the country.

The development of the country is the best medium through which to achieve the goals set by the late Imam Khomeyni and Leader of the Islamic Republic Ayatollah Seyyed 'Ali Khamene'i.

He paid tribute to the President and said, "Ayatollah (Akbar) Hashemi Rafsanjani was, and is, the architect and the commander of the (country's) reconstruction process."

"Ayatollah Hashemi (Rafsanjani) depends on the (services of) servants of cultural, social and economic affairs for the reconstruction," the G-16 member said.

All forces of the society should participate in the elections for the continuation of the development and rehabilitation of Iran, he said.

"This is the only reason that the Servants of Reconstruction (G-16) entered into the election arena, so that suitable grounds may be prepared for the participation of all the faithful forces following the Imam's line (followers of the Imam's thinking) and the Leader," he said.

"The movement of the G-16 was welcomed by the masses. This movement is a revolutionary one which will result in a powerful and comprehensive Majles," he said.

"This Majles (the Fifth Term) will come out from under the domination of one particular faction," he said referring to the present formation of the Majles where the JRM holds the majority.

According to another report, Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization of Iran (IRMOI) Secretary-General, Mohammad Salamati, ruled out the possibility of entering into a coalition with any faction or group, even the G-16.

Left-winger Salamati on Thursday attended a question-and-answer session organized by university students along with IRMOI leader Behzad Nabavi.

"We have differences of view with others except those sharing the views of the left, and we are ready to join in a coalition with them," Salamati said.

Behzad Nabavi, 54, said his group will conditionally participate in the elections.

"At any stage, if we come to a conclusion that [the] elections have become unhealthy, we will withdraw," Nabavi said.

"For example," he said, "we will withdraw if the competency of any candidate is rejected without proper reason and proof, or if the government-owned media make propaganda against us."

Nabavi, 54, said, "We would like the reasons for the rejection of the would-be candidates to be made public by the authorities."

Nabavi, an electronic engineer, served in the cabinets of the martyred Prime Minister, Mohammad Javad Bahonar, Prime Minister Ayatollah Mahdavi-Kani and Prime Minister Mir Hoseyn Musavi in the 1980s. His last government post was minister of Heavy Industries in the cabinet of Prime Minister Musavi.

According to the Interior Ministry, 2,248 nomination papers were filed at the ministry by closing time Friday.

Political Factions Finalizing Their Lists

96LA0139A Tehran IRAN NEWS in English 4 Feb 96 pp 1, 13

[Article by IRAN NEWS political commentator]

[FBIS Transcribed Text] Tehran—The entire election process for the Fifth Term of the Majles entered into a crucial stage after the advent of the senior executives on the political scene.

Despite their hectic activities, no political faction or group, except the Jame'eh-ye Rowhaniyat-e Mobarez (JRM), could issue a list of their candidates.

The list of candidates are issued by the political factions for the Tehran Constituency only. The constituency plays a key role in the administration of the Majles.

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The JRM has dropped the names of six current members of the Majles and included the same number of names from outside the legislative body.

Those omitted from the JRM list were Sa'id Raja'i-Khorasani, Mohammad Kazem Seyfian, Mohammad Hashem Rahbari, Saber Hamidbegi, Amid Zanjani and Gheyuri-Najafabadi.

New names on the JRM list are Judiciary's Assadollah Badamchian, former Justice Minister Seyyed Mohammad Asghari, former Health Minister Musa Zargar, former Director of the Housing Foundation of the Islamic Republic Davud Danesh Ja'fari, Director-general of Leader's Office for Cultural Affairs, Hojjat ol-Eslam Abdol Hoseyn Mo'ezzi, and former Majles deputy from Semnan Seyyed Reza Akrami.

A source close to G-16 told IRAN NEWS that the faction has almost completed its list.

The same source disclosed that the list of G-16 will include, 10 clerics including Deputy Speaker Dr. Hasan Rowhani, ETTELA'AT Institute Director and Majles Deputy Mohammad Doa'i, people's representative Qorban 'Ali Dorri-Najafabadi, former Interior Minister Abdollah Nuri and Islamic Propagation Organization's Art Bureau Director Hojjat ol-Eslam Mohammad 'Ali Zam.

He said, "There is every likelihood that few names will appear on the list of the JRM as well as the G-16."

"The G-16 will never accept radical leftists," the source told IRAN NEWS. He said the G-16 is closely cooperating with Khaneh-ye Kargar, a labor organization of the Islamic Republic which covers labors [as publish] and peasants across the country.

He said G-16 has already included the names of 'Ali Reza Mahjub and Ms. Soheyla Jelodarzadeh.

Khane-ye Kargar and G-16 are still discussing the name of former Labor Minister Abdol Qasem Sarhadizadeh, a left leaning revolutionary who was jailed by the Shah's regime several times for his political activities.

Free Trade Zone Secretary Morteza Alviri's name is also on the G-16's final list.

Another informed source told IRAN NEWS that Iranian Ambassador to Saudi Arabia Mohammad Hadi has returned home recently. He said Hadi has already filed his nomination papers and will enjoy the support of the G-16.

According to another unexpected development, G-16 approached the Women Sports Organization Director Fa'ezeh Hashemi to include her name in their list.

"Well, Ms. Hashemi conditionally accepted the offer of the G-16. She said that she will make a final decision only after consultation with her father (President Akbar Hashemi-Rafsanjani)," he said.

The Leftist faction?

The Islamic Revolution Mojahedin Organization of Iran (IRMOI) told IRAN NEWS that people such as former miniter Behzad Nabavi, Hashemi Aqajari, ASR-E MA magazine's Editor-in-Chief Mohsen Armin, student activist Sa'id Hajarian, former agriculture minister Mohammad Salamati and former Labor Minister Abdol Qasem Sarhadizadeh are definitely on the list of the leftist organization.

"Talks with 'Abbas Abdi, Editor-in-Chief of the Persian daily SALAM, are continuing and a final decision is to be made any moment," he said.

There was difference of opinion between the moderate and hardline elements of the Freedom Movement. The moderates, led by former foreign minister Ebrahim Yazdi finally succeeded in convincing others to take part in the upcoming parliamentary elections.

The names which have been finalized by the faction are Yazdi, former Interior Minister Hashem Sabbaghian, former Majles Deputy Yusef Ashkvari, former Oil Minister 'Ali Akbar Moinfar, Abdol'ali Bazargan, son of the first interim Prime Minister the late campaign from Feb. 29 through March 7. [sentence as published]

Deputy Interior Minister 'Ali Reza Tabish talking to IRNA said no candidate will be allowed to campaign in the name of a political party, faction or group if the party, faction or group if the party, faction or group is not recognized officially.

He urged the government managers, the media, the municipalities, provincial offices and the candidates to observe the prevailing election laws.

He reminded the employees in the ministries and government organizations of their duty to be neutral during the Majles elections.

"No government employee, using his or her offical title is allowed to work for or against any of the candidates," Tabish said referring to the elction laws of the Islamic Republic.

"Government-owned or affiliated print media are banned from making propaganda for or against the candidates," Tabish said.

According to an IRNA report, the election headquarters at the Interior Ministry yesterday announced that 130 current Majles deputies have filed their nomination papers for the elections of March 8.

So far, a total of 2,659 candidates have filed their nomination papers in 196 constituencies across the country including 303 from the Tehran Constituency.

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